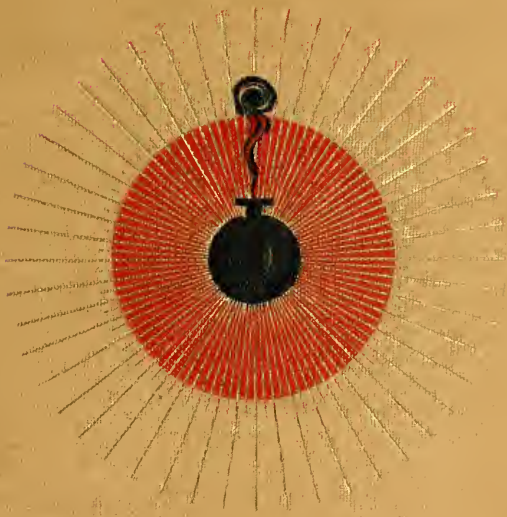
THE MARTYRED FOOL



DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY

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THE MARTYRED FOOL

A Novel

BY

DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY

AUTHOR OF

"AUNT RACHEL" "JOSEPH'S COAT" "BY THE GATE OF THE SEA"
"TIME'S REVENGES" "IN DIREST PERIL" ETC.

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1895

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THE MARTYRED FOOL

Book First

THE SOWING OF THE SEED

CHAPTER I

Just fourteen years ago, in the July, that is to say, of the year 1879, a very small boy sat shivering on the bank of a swift-flowing, turbid stream, with his back to the trunk of a big tree, and his hands rammed deep into the pockets of his ragged trousers. If the small boy had peeped round the big tree almost due north-east, he might have seen very dimly and very far away the last spur of the Australian Alps. If he had followed the turbid stream five miles, he might have stood on the shore of the South Pacific Ocean. Small as he was he was aware of both of these facts already, and had no inclination either to look or to wander. It was early July, and mid-winter. He was bitterly cold, and still more bitterly hungry, and his young heart was filled with loathing of the world, and with anger at the inequalities of fortune. Across the swift-flowing waters of the creek, only four or five hundred yards away, stood the prosperous and rising settlement of Koollala, embraced all around by rising tracts of eucalyptus forest. The great, changeless gums wore in dead winter the same solemn and sombre livery they showed in spring, in summer, and in autumn, and without in the least knowing why, the small boy felt hurt and dispirited in the face of this fact of

nature. Around him and before him the great shapeless trunks rustled their cerements of gray bark, and their leafy boughs sobbed in answer to the uneven wind. The river had a voice of mourning, and the clouds that scurried over the tree-tops threatened rain.

The prosperous and rising settlement of Koollala, so far as it was visible from the root of the big gum-tree on which the small boy sat, consisted of ten or a dozen houses built of weatherboard, and set on stilts, to save them from the rain which occasionally rushed down from the surrounding heights, or the waters which occasionally trespassed from the creek below. The rudely split planks of which these scattered tenements were built had once been white, but were now purple gray, rusty gray, green gray, from exposure to all sorts of weather. Everywhere among the scattered houses were evidences of a rough cultivation, but in all the unfenced fields great charred stems of trees stood up like monuments of ruin, and the prosperous and rising settlement looked at least as much like a graveyard as a village. The land had been cleared to the water's edge, but behind the knoll on which the small boy sat, sinking in sombre bowl after sombre bowl of foliage, lay the unbroken primeval forest. The waters of the creek ran five or six hundred feet higher than the land in their immediate neighborhood, but many a thousand years ago they had been caught in a cleft of granite, and unable to break through that strong boundary, still held their first course toward the greater waters of the ocean.

What with cold and what with hunger, what with a certain eerie sense of loneliness and a certain bitter chafing against the world at large, the small boy gritted his teeth and had to close his eyelids very tight and hard to prevent the flow of tears. People are apt to think little of the sentimental woes of children, but Evan Rhys, ætat. seven, was as full of despair and rage

against the world as he could well have been if he had been seven and twenty. He clenched his red fists tightly in his ragged pockets, set his teeth hard, and squeezed his eyelids as closely as they would go, and the whole declaration of the infant soul was in favor of no surrender. As he sat thus, a boy on a pony approached the creek from the civilized side, and after staring about him a while, sighted an old and stubborn antagonist.

"Halloa, you there!" he shouted in an imperious treble.

The small boy was on his feet in an instant.

"Halloa, you!"

"How did you get over there?" said the boy on the pony.

"Find out!" said Evan Rhys.

The boy on the pony was very nattily dressed, and the boy on the far side of the creek was in rags. They were of the same age within a month or two, and the dullest observer of their encounter could have seen an offensive patronage on the one side, and an angry repudiation of it on the other.

"Do you hear what I am saying?" asked the boy on the pony. "I asked you how you got there."

"Do you hear what *I'm* saying?" the enemy answered. "I told you to find out. You dassn't come, any way!"

"Daren't I?" said the boy on the pony. "I dare do anything you dare do. A lout can never beat a gentleman."

"Can't he?" said young Evan Rhys, with a grimness beyond his years. "You come across and see."

"Come across yourself," said the trim young Valentine, disdainful of the woodland Orson before him. "We'll jolly soon see who's master!"

"All right!" said Evan Rhys, accepting the challenge with alacrity. "You go round the bend o' the crick. There's a big gum fell over there. You climb over that crick, only you dassn't!"

"Oh, yes, I dare!" said the other boy coolly, dismounting from his pony as he spoke.

"Oh, no, you dassn't!" responded the woodland challenger.

The boy opposite hitched his pony to a shrub near at hand and walked alongside the creek. The enemy kept pace with him on the other side. Thirty or forty yards up stream the river swerved suddenly, and a little beyond the turning it was seen that a giant gum, some thirty feet in girth, had fallen from its rain-soaked bed, and now lay prone across the raging waters, forming a rude natural bridge. The enormous breadth of the tree made it impossible for the intending intruder to climb it at any spot nearer than that at which the lower branches, vast as an English elm, stretched out on either side. To reach the nearest of these, he had to turn his back upon his enemy, who took unfair advantage of that circumstance, and jeered at him.

"A gentleman wouldn't have done that," the other shouted across the broiling water. "Don't you think I'm afraid of you! I've got to turn my back to get at you, but I *shall* get at you all the same."

Evan Rhys, in anticipation of battle, took off his ragged jacket, turned up his ragged shirt-sleeves, and began to beat himself about the chest and shoulders with both swinging hands. The enemy meantime climbed actively enough, reached the great flat back of the prostrate trunk, ran across it, and climbed down by the wet and slippery roots at the far end, growing very muddy and untidy in the process. Arrived, and being face to face with his enemy, he, too, took off his jacket, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves. Then the juvenile combatants shook hands on the young gentleman's invitation, and set to work.

The fortune of war was various, and now on the slippery and uneven earth one was down, and now another. On the

whole, whether it were fortune, pluck, or skill, or that disdain of pain which poverty is early taught to feel, the ragged boy began to get a good deal the better of it ; but the other's pride was up in arms, and it was evident that so long as he had a grain of fight left in him he was not likely to ask for quarter. The war was not carried out according to the rules of art, and included a good deal of clinching. Once or twice the combatants fell out of breath together, and glared, exhausted, at each other, till one of them said "time." The word was talismanic, for the failure to respond to it would have been regarded as a surrender, and, whenever it was spoken by either, the other breathless infant struggled to his feet, and the strife began anew. At length, in one of the unscientific clinches which marred the display from an artistic point of view, the ragged boy fell so heavily upon the young gentleman as to drive all the wind out of his body, and rising, beheld him comatose, or thereabouts.

"Had enough ?" asked Evan Rhys.

The gentleman warrior gasped like a fish and rolled his eyes, but was in no condition for verbal answer.

"Say you've had enough !" said the conqueror, advancing vengefully.

The other rolled over, face downward, on the ground, and the rustic touched him contemptuously with the toe of his ragged boot.

"There," he said, "you've been kicked, and you lie down to it. If you'll do that, you'll do anything. Don't you come a-nigh me any more, that's all."

The defeated combatant was at too great a disadvantage. He was unable to make answer, and when at last he came to himself he saw his late opponent perched high in the muddy roots of the fallen eucalypt above him, with the thumb of derision planted at the tip of a muddy and bloodstained nose.

"Had enough?" said Evan Rhys from that height of vantage.

The young gentleman said nothing, but rolled down his sleeves, and struggled into his jacket. He stood sullen and downcast for a full minute, hitching his feet here and there, and shrinking from an encounter with the victor's eye.

"Fair play up there!" he said at last; "no shoving when I'm not ready."

By way of sole response Evan Rhys arose from his perch among the clotted roots and slid down to the broad trunk of the tree, across which he sauntered with an air of irritating indifference to the other side. Thus left to himself, the vanquished followed in his footsteps, and mounting his pony rode off unmolested.

Little Evan walked into the village. The miry, unmade road, full of deep cart-ruts, and pitted everywhere with the tracks of sheep and cattle, led him between mournful clearings in which the scanty stubble of the last harvest slowly rotted. Here was a patch of black bean-stalk, and there a patch of scanty rye-straw; here a segment on which wheat had been grown, and here another which had been sown with oats or barley; all easily recognizable to the accustomed eye. None of the crops were fenced, and among the desolate reminders of them all stood the huge charred stumps, some of them still retaining their tortured branches, and standing in such weird and writhen attitudes that they seemed still to retain the memory of the torment of their burning. The rain began to pelt down sharp and cold, and the small boy, tucking the ragged collar of his jacket about his ears, ran for the furthest house. Here a ladder of half a dozen steps led to the floor of a rotten veranda, about the supports of which twined a quantity of bare and dejected creeper, which had doubtless been grown there to give pleasure to the eye,

but now played its part in adding to the decrepit and ruined look of the whole building. The broken windows had been inefficiently pasted over with old rags of paper, which now fluttered disconsolate in the wet wind. The wail of an ill-tempered and neglected child sounded from the outer chamber of the house. A litter of pigs, in a ruinous lean-to attached to the building, fought and squealed. There had once been an attempt made at the arrangement of a garden about the building, but this had evidently been abandoned for some seasons past, and was now in a state of ruin and disorder, which fitted all the rest.

An unkempt, ragged woman issued from the house at the sound of the boy's footsteps.

"Yew're back again," she said, in a strong English west-country accent, and then a moment later, "Yew've been a-fighting again, our Evan."

"Yes, I have," our Evan answered, edging away a little, and raising a defensive elbow.

The woman, with a shrug of resigned despair, turned back into the house, and ill-temperedly hitched out from its darkened recesses a tin bucket of potatoes. She made another entry, and returned with a tin bowl of somewhat muddy water and a knife.

"Peel them," she said, "and see as yew don't waste 'em like ye did yesterday. If ye do, I'll peel *yew*."

The boy arranged the materials for his task before him, and sat down, half-sheltered from the rain, upon a three-legged stool.

"Who ha' yew been a-fighting with this time?" his mother asked, with a querulous tone of exasperation in her voice.

"I've give that young Penthearn a hiding," Evan answered.

"Or else took one from him," said his mother ungraciously.

"I'm bad enough," the boy responded, passing his sleeve gingerly across the tip of his damaged nose, "but you should ha' seen him! He won't come a-cheekin' me no more."

"Oh!" said his mother, "like father, like son! There's no dealin' with ayther on ye. If I'd ha' known what I was a-doin', I'd ha' gone a long way afore I'd ha' married a Welshman. If I'd ha' known what he was a-doin' when he asked me to come out to Australia, I'd ha' seen him further first, and then I wouldn't. Tile and mile from marnin' till night, and no rest ever, and nothin' to be got out of it." A sudden squeal from the pigsty arrested her attention. "We'll have to kill 'em to keep 'em from starvin', though where the salt's to come from to cure 'em, I don't know. They're askin' two shillings a peck for it, and there ain't sixpence in the house, nor sixpence-worth, so far as I know. Do you see how you're a-wastin' them potatoes, our Evan? My life here ain't nothin' but one continual grind. Nothin' goes right, and nobody takes a minute's notice o' me."

Possibly the small boy was used to this dejected mood, and knew aforetime the voice of these reproaches. He worked on at least like a stoic, looking neither to right nor left, and paying no more apparent heed to his mother than he did to the equal meaning of the voices of the wind and rain. The woman curled her hands in her untidy apron as some refuge against the biting cold, and shrank back half within the door-way.

"There's yew," she said, evidently exasperated by the child's silence, "a-fighting every day and all day with all and sundry, and there's your father away all day after politics. I never see such a family in all my born days. What's it matter to him who's M. L. A. for the districk? 'Spose he does get Watson in? He says he will, but I don't believe he's got no more influence than you have.

Will that mend these 'ere dratted winders, or find the wash to feed thickyer crowd o' pigs? Oh, I'm sick o' you and him and everythin' and everybody. If I wasn't a Christian woman with a soul to save, I'd go this minute and drown myself in that there crick. I 'ouldn't live another hour, I 'ouldn't!"

The youthful Evan, pausing only now and then to caress his injured nose with the palm of a dirt-grimed hand, peeled his potatoes, and dropped them one by one into the pannikin of dirty water, comforting himself as he did so with some distant view of an insufficient meal. His mother went indoors, and snatching up the crying baby, spanked him with sudden ardor, and set him to nature's fount. She came back again with the child in a slatternly bundle at her breast, and nagged for half an hour. By the end of that time the potatoes were all peeled, and Evan was despatched to the creek for more water. As he came back staggering under the weight of the bucket, a man stepped on to the veranda and took his seat upon a three-legged stool. He was a tall, gaunt fellow, with a pale olive complexion, lank black hair, clear-cut and handsome features, and eyes which looked the very natural home of a permanent discontent. He was dressed in a suit of patched moleskin, which gleamed with moisture, and as he took his seat he struck his streaming wide-awake angrily against his leg, and distributed a shower about the veranda.

"The people about here," he said, with a marked Welsh accent, "haf no sense whatever. They haf no character whatever. They see that efery-poty is going to the tefil, and they let efery-poty go."

"I wish I'd never seen the country," said the woman, sulkily nursing her child, half in and half out of the doorway.

"Inteet," her husband answered, "I tare say the country returns the compliment."

Young Evan came staggering to the steps of the brief ladder, and his father, rising and stooping, took from him with a strong hand the bucket he carried. This, by a series of small misadventures on the way, had been half emptied, and heavy as it was in the child's hands, the man lifted it as if it had been a feather.

The man plunged both hands amongst the potatoes in the pannikin, and began to wash them in the fresher water brought from the creek.

"Young Efan Rhys," he said to his son meanwhile, "I want you to rememper this. You'll nefer get any goot out of the folks who call themselves chentlepeople. They co for their own interests, and they co for nothing else, and nefer will. The poor man's hant is akainst them from the pekinning, and will be till the endt. Nefer forget that." He rose suddenly from the three-legged stool, and bending down toward the boy put a forefinger under his chin, and by a series of little jerks edged his face upward. "You've been fighting."

"Well," said young Evan, with a defiance which seemed to be a part of the family attitude, "I'd got to. I wasn't going to let young Penthearn cheek me and not cheek him back again."

"Was he impertinent?" asked the father.

"He said 'halloa' to me," Evan answered, "and I said 'halloa' to him."

"Quite right too," said Papa Rhys.

"Then he said he'd come across and give me a hiding. I told him he dassn't, and he did, and I gave him one."

"Quite right too," said Papa Rhys. "If efer you see a chance to hit a chentleman, hit him. You can't co wrong, my boy—you can't co wrong."

So saying, the gaunt man patted his son upon the head approvingly; then, half rising, he passed the thumb and fingers of each hand strenuously from thigh to knee of his

moleskin trousers, squeezing out the moisture from them in a thin, discolored stream, and taking up the bucket full of potatoes, walked indoors. Evan, a little comforted by the paternal approval, fingered his damaged nose with an inward sense of triumph.

Out of the one track in the bush which led past the station of Merioneth to the great district town, twenty miles away, came a road-worn figure carrying an exaggerated looking kind of knapsack. The bearer of the knapsack slipped on the rain-soaked, clayey soil, and narrowly escaped a fall. Then he came zigzagging from side to side, hidden to the midriff by an intervening hillock. The hillock surmounted, he came skating down the clay counterside, and then, a little more at ease, butting at the wind and rain with crouching head and shoulders, approached the house.

"We don't want no tramps here!" said Mrs. Rhys, who still stood nursing her baby half in and half out of the door-way.

"Who says not?" her husband demanded from inside.

The new-comer reached the veranda and paused, hat in hand, his hair tumbled by the streaming rain and roaring wind.

"What do you want?" asked Mrs. Rhys.

The man's face was foreign, and when he spoke it was in a foreign tongue. Evan Rhys the elder emerged from the door-way and bade him enter.

"We're poor folks here," he said, "and haf little to gif to anypoty, but you're welcome to share what there iss."

Whether the man took in the words seemed doubtful, but the master of the house made him a gesture which he understood. He mounted the ladder with an air of toil, and releasing a strap on his right shoulder, laid his burden to the ground, and smiled.

CHAPTER II

The smiling stranger read no welcome in the eye of Mrs. Rhys, who scowled at him with an open hostility and contempt, and turning her back upon him walked deliberately indoors. The new-comer's face fell, and he looked at Evan Rhys the elder with a childlike appeal and propitiation in his face.

"It's all right, Johnny," said Rhys, laying a friendly hand upon his shoulder. "Nefer you mind the missus. Sit down and rest. You look as if you'd travelled a long way whatefer."

He pushed the three-legged stool toward the stranger with his foot, and motioned him to be seated.

The man drew back with bent head, and hands outstretched in polite protest, and spoke a word or two which conveyed nothing to the minds of his hearers. Rhys took him gently by the shoulders, and the man, obeying the impulse thus given him, sat down, and smiled once more. He was apparently about fifty years of age, short in stature and sturdily built. His long iron-gray hair, parted in the centre, fell almost to his shoulders without a symptom of a curl, until it curved inward at the ends. He had a remarkable mass of forehead, a nose of extreme brevity, as broad at the base as it was long, thick protrusive lips, half hidden under a gray mustache, and a long bifurcated beard. He needed only the robe and head-dress peculiar to the craft to have stood as a type of the peasant priest of the Greek Church. His eyes were large, soft, and luminous, and they and the forehead together might have belonged to a saint and a poet. The squat nose and

sensual lips were Tartar all over. The physiognomy was half angelic, half animal.

"Look here, you Efan," said the master of the house to the small boy. "Put that sack across your shoulders and run across to Frenchy. If he iss at home, ask him to come ofer."

The boy took up a piece of old sacking from the floor, threw it about his head and shoulders, and was gone. The stranger drew from his pockets a pipe of well-blacked clay, a good-sized hunch of tobacco, and a formidable-looking clasp-knife. He began to shred the tobacco and to fill his pipe. Rhys involuntarily put a hand into his waistcoat pocket and drew out a well-used clay, but immediately returned it, with a look both furtive and ashamed. The new arrival noticed the gesture, and stretched out the tobacco and the knife. Rhys protested feebly, but the stranger insisting, he accepted the offer, and having shredded for himself a very modest portion, stood rubbing it between his horny palms, and looking out at the slanting lines of rain, which came down more and more bitterly.

"Fire?" enquired the stranger, touching the bowl of his pipe to make his meaning clear.

"All right, Johnny," Rhys answered, and entering the house came back in a second or two with a lighted brand from the kitchen fire.

Each man lit his pipe, and for a while smoked in silence. It was Rhys's first taste of tobacco for a fortnight, and he sucked at his pipe with animal noises of satisfaction.

"Dobro?" said the stranger, looking up at him and laughing. Rhys stared. "Good, eh?"

"You may well say that," the Welshman answered. "There is nothing petter than a pipe of topacco when you're hungry for it."

"Good!" returned the stranger, understanding the tone, if not the words.

After this conversation came to an end, but in about five minutes' time Evan the younger came whooping through the rain, waving his hand as if to indicate the prosperity of his mission. He reached the veranda out of breath, and pantingly announced that Frenchy would be there directly. In effect a man in a glistening wet waterproof was seen striding hastily along the main street as the boy made his announcement. He waved a hand to Rhys, and quickening his pace to a run, sprang nimbly to the floor of the veranda, and looked about him with a bright laugh.

"What is this?" he said. "Your boy tells me you have some kind of foreign creature here who can neither speak nor be spoken to. If he can speak French or German I am his man, but there my accomplishment in the way of languages comes to an end."

The foreign accent with which he spoke was so faintly marked that it would be unjust to attempt to indicate it by phonetics. The French rhythm was there, but the rhythm only, and his choice of words was made without approach at hesitation. The speaker himself was tall and blond, animated to his finger-tips, and as obviously a gentleman as Rhys was obviously a peasant. He turned on the stranger with a bow which was part burlesque, part politeness, and part high spirits, and addressed him in German. The stranger responded in the flat, unaccented French which is so commonly noticeable among the Russians who speak that language.

"Aha!" cried the latest comer, "nous sommes à nôtre aise!"

The two fell into animated talk, and Rhys stared in a bewildered fashion from one to the other, striving in vain to separate a single word from its neighbors. He had spoken Welsh and English indifferently from his earliest childhood, but this was the first occasion on which

he had ever heard a conversation in a language unknown to him, and he had a half suspicion that there was no meaning in it. The two men became more and more eagerly engaged, and in a little while each was so animated and noisy that the onlooker foreboded a quarrel. To his utter amazement, and not a little to his disgust, the scene ended by an embrace in which each kissed the other repeatedly upon either cheek. To kiss a pretty girl had been all very well in its way once upon a time, as Evan Rhys could very well remember, but for a man to kiss a man, and for the man kissed to be a foreigner into the bargain, was nauseating to the stomach. The exhibition was no sooner over than the latest comer turned flashing on Rhys, with both hands gesticulating wildly overhead, and his eyes burning like coals of fire.

"My God!" he said, "you have entertained angels unawares, my good friend Evan Rhys. Who do you think is this man who comes here in the guise of a pedler, who, hoping to make a morsel of bread, tramps twenty miles to this rotten village on a day like this? Who is it, do you think?"

"Well," said Rhys, "who iss it?"

"It is Boris Petrovna!" returned the other, with an air as regal as if he had introduced an emperor.

"I nefer heart of him," said Rhys.

"This is the man," the other declaimed, shaking the forefinger of his outstretched right hand under Rhys's nose—"this is the man who for fifteen years was the mainspring, the brain, the right hand of revolutionary Russia. This is the man who, ten years back, in the prime of life and the fulness of his kingly intellect, was condemned for life to the mines of Siberia. This is the man who executed his jailer, who travelled on foot two thousand miles across the winter desert, who was recaptured, who escaped again, and with whose name the ears of all

lovers of liberty throughout the world have been made to tingle!"

"That iss all right," said Rhys. "I am fery glat to see you, sir." He reached out a hand toward the pedler, who accepted it warmly.

"Tell him," said Evan Rhys, his olive skin flushing with a sudden passion, "that my grandfather wass a Chartist, and wass killed py the tragoons at Peterloo. He wass my grandfather on my mother's side."

"So I will, old Steadfast!" cried the Frenchman, clapping him boisterously on the shoulder. "This is one of us," he continued in his own language. "This man's grandfather was a martyr in the cause of liberty in England fifty years ago."

Boris Petrovna rose solemnly from the three-legged stool and bowed.

"The good seed," he said, "is everywhere. We shall reap the harvest in due time. Here at least,"—he waved a hand about him,—"is liberty."

"Liberty!" cried the Frenchman; "there is here, as elsewhere, the liberty to scramble with your fellow-creatures for insufficient bread. The poor man enjoys here, as elsewhere, the liberty to lie down and allow himself to be trampled on by the rich. Ask our friend Evan Rhys, here, how he appreciates his liberty, and how much more free he finds himself in the new world than he used to be in the old."

"Ask him," said Petrovna, "and tell me what he says."

The Frenchman took up his parable in English.

"Mr. Petrovna says that there is liberty here. I have told him to ask your opinion on that question. How much more liberty have you here than you enjoyed in the old country?"

"I wass nefer so worse off in all my life," Rhys responded gloomily. "It iss a young country, and there iss chances

in it. But, look you, it wass Squire Penthearn's father in Merionethshire who stole my father's little pit of ground, and it iss Squire Penthearn out here who puys up all the land that iss worth any thing whatefer. We are in a new country, but the laws are the same. There is efery thing for the man who does not want any thing, and there iss nothing for the man who iss in need of efery thing."

The Frenchman translated this speech, and Petrovna threw his hands abroad with a resigning gesture.

"Yet," he said, "I have heard otherwise from many."

"Ah!" the Frenchman answered, "as our friend here says, it is a young country, and there are chances in it. The chances," he added, looking about him, "do not always prosper. This is the home of enterprise and industry, but does it look like it?"

"Elsewhere," said Petrovna, "in this new land I have found prosperity everywhere. Why should there be poverty and stagnation here?"

"This," his companion answered, "might have been as prosperous as any place you have found in all your wanderings. But the curse of the capitalist is upon it. Every bit of land worth any thing for miles and miles about us has been bought by one wealthy man. This handful of imported peasantry is bound by a girdle of iron. It has no power to extend its boundaries, and by and by it will wither all away. You will not find many such places in Australia at present, but unless things change they will be thick and threefold in a hundred years, vast as the country is. It is a new land, but the old curse is upon it."

Rhys, who in his modesty had but one-third filled his pipe, crammed a horny fore-finger into the bowl, and pressed down the little remnant of tobacco there to secure a final whiff or two. He planted his broad shoulders against the wet weather-board of the house, and looked angrily at

the dismal prospect before him. Little Evan stared wide-eyed and open-mouthed at the men who thought it worth while to expend so much fire and fervor on a jargon which must be incomprehensible to every-body. The mother, free of the slatternly child by this time, lounged to the door with her hands beneath her apron, and surveyed the whole group with pronounced disfavor.

Boris Petrovna pulled at his well-blacked clay in silence, and looked discomfited and depressed.

On a sudden a squelching and pounding noise was heard, followed by the sound of splashing and the long slide of a horse's hoofs. With this last came the tones of an imperious voice :

"Hold up, you stupid brute ! and be d——d to you !"

"That iss Squire Penthearn," said Rhys, turning an angry eye toward the opening in the bush, but otherwise making no movement.

Squire Penthearn came into the open at a hand gallop, and drew up in front of the party on the veranda. He was in his way as Welsh as Evan Rhys himself, but the type was wholly different. The peasant was black-haired, with an olive skin and eyes like night. The gentleman was foxy-red, hair, beard, and eyebrows all of the same rufous tone. His eyes were blue-gray, and, though his skin was somewhat tanned with lifelong exposure to all sorts of weather, it had been originally of that excessive fairness and pallor which so often accompany red hair. His eyes blazed with anger, and the riding-crop he carried trembled in his outstretched hand. He had started in a rage, he had ridden in a rage five miles, flogging his own anger all the way, and now, what with breathlessness,—for he was a burly man, and hard riding tried his wind a good deal,—and what with the passion which by this time fairly mastered him, he could not speak. He sat snorting and blowing and shaking his riding-crop for near on a minute.

Rhys's gloomy stare met his own glance full, and the man, nursing his now empty clay pipe in one corner of his mouth, threw one leg over the other, and dug his hands into his trousers pockets with an air of contemptuous defiance which exasperated Squire Penthearn still further.

The Frenchman looked from one to the other with a glance of amusement, which broadened more and more.

"Look here!" said the horseman, with a spluttering, wrathful stammer, "look here, you Rhys."

"I am looking," said Rhys, with angry quiet.

"If that brat of yours," stuttered Penthearn, "ever dares to lay a hand on my boy again, I'll cut his life out."

"Then," said Rhys, "I shall haf the pleasure of seeing you hanged, and there will pe two troublesome people less."

Mr. Penthearn was getting his wind back again, and began to storm gustily, his face growing paler and paler as he raged.

"My boy rides home, mud from head to heel, with a black eye, and one tooth knocked out, and tells me it's that young imp's doing."

"Very well," said the small boy. "What did he say 'Halloa' to me for? He isn't every-body."

"What did he say 'Halloa' to you for, you spawn of Satan!" cried the angry horseman, raising his crop threateningly.

Evan Rhys dashed at the boy, and took him in his arms.

"Now, you stand there," he said, setting him in the door-way, "and answer me. You haf been fighting with young Penthearn?"

"Well," said Evan the younger, "he challenged me. I was on the far side of the crick, and he come over. He said any gentleman could beat a lout, and I said he dussn't come. He said he dar, and he did, and we had a fight."

"That seems all fair enough, doesn't it, farmer?" asked the young Frenchman.

"Farmer!" cried Penthearn, in an exasperation so profound that the word sounded like a cry of anguish. "Farmer!" His Welsh blood had been hot enough already in all conscience, but at this smiling insult he fairly bubbled over. He contrived to stutter out: "You d——d Frenchman!" as he struggled from his horse. He was encumbered by the long water-proof cloak he wore, the skirt of which caught in his right spur; but his intention was so evident that the insulter felt himself justified in stepping from the veranda and possessing himself of the angry man's riding-crop. There was a tussle, which lasted only a second or two, and the Frenchman, cool as a cucumber, had seized that weapon of offence and stood on guard with it, as if to begin a bout at single-stick.

"My good friend," he said, "you are fat, and verging on the sixties. It will be quite a mistake for you to assault me. I am, as you are good enough to say, a d——d Frenchman, but I was bred at Oxford, and studied there the noble art of self-defence."

Penthearn, with a mighty effort, controlled himself. He had pluck in plenty, but, even in the madness of his anger, he had self-restraint enough to see the ignominy of inevitable defeat. That fact did not serve to cool him, though it restrained him from any further attempt at violence.

"Bred at Oxford!" he sneered passionately, rising suddenly from the speechless red heat of excitement to that white heat which knows how to be fluent and accurate in its choice of words. "Bred at Oxford! Wherever you were bred, you were bred to be a puppy, a bully, and a blackguard! You left your country for your country's good, I fancy. That's a fact, I think, monsieur? You ought to be a better man than you are, for you were sent out to

New Caledonia by three of the best judges in your own country. They gave you twenty years, I think."

"The jest is excellent," returned the smiling Frenchman, "but not original. It was first levelled at your fellow-subjects, inhabitants of this charming country."

"I won't parley with you any more," said Penthearn. "And as for you,"—turning on Rhys,—"I want you to understand, if that brat of yours dares to lay a hand upon my boy again, I'll find a way to make him sorry for it!"

"And," said Evan Rhys, flushing to the eyes, "if that prat of yours dares to lay a hand upon my poy again, my poy shall peat him as he did to-day, and as he can any day."

"An excellent mutual understanding," said the Frenchman. "Your riding-crop, sir." He handed the weapon to Penthearn, who swung it back, mastered by a new impulse of rage. He found himself seized by either wrist. "Better be quiet, farmer," said his adversary, with a face of smiling mockery. "Ride home, like a good fellow, and let us have no more nonsense. Boys will fight, and their parents should know better than to interfere between them."

"You infernal cad!" said Penthearn. "Call yourself the Comte de Montmeillard, don't you?"

"I call myself nothing, sir," said the Frenchman. "But people who know me address me by my name."

"You're a jail-bird," said Penthearn, "whatever else you are!"

"That is perfectly true," the Frenchman answered, "but a repetition of the statement may tempt me to flog you, sir, and you are an older man than I am. I should advise you to go, and to go without delay."

He released his hold upon Penthearn's wrists, and, turning his back upon him, sprang lightly on to the veranda.

Penthearn mounted, and rode away slowly, without another word.

"Mr. Petrovna," said the Frenchman, addressing Rhys, "will come with me. I can give him house-room in my little shanty, and he will be happier with somebody whom he can understand. Come with me, M. Petrovna," he continued, in his own tongue.

The pedler rose from the three-legged stool, re-shouldered his pack, saluted Rhys and his wife, and trudged off through the rain by the side of his new-found host.

"I say, dad," said Evan the younger, after a pause.

"Halloa!" said Rhys, looking down at him.

The woman had gone indoors again to look after her supper of potatoes.

"Is that true?" asked Evan the younger. "Is Frenchy a lag?"

"Yess, my poy," said Rhys, gloomier than ever. "You will know petter apont it when you are a man. That iss how all civilized countries treat men who ask for freetom."

"What did he do?" asked Evan the younger. "He didn't nobble any thing that didn't belong to him, did he?"

"Wait here a minute," said the father, "and I will show you something."

He walked into the house, and returned a moment later with a little shabby gray book, bound in glazed boards.

"You haf been a good poy to-day," he said, laying his big hand lightly on the lad's tattered wide-awake. "There iss a great teal in this which you will not be able to understand. But you can read this little book, and when you have read it all, you can come to me, and I will answer all your questions."

Evan the younger experienced a thrill of exultation as he laid his dirty little paw upon the volume.

"You shall first," said his father, "wash your hands, and always before you touch that pook you shall wash your hands."

Evan the younger darted into the house, and came back smelling of mottled soap. In his enthusiasm he had even attacked the unirrigated surface of his features. He was clean from chin to eyebrows, though forehead, ears, and throat were still left under their ancient winter incrustation. In summer Evan spent half his time in the deeper holes of the creek, but in the cold season he and water rarely made acquaintance with each other. But being now thus far purified, he was intrusted with the little volume, and sat down to study the indictment hurled against Napoleon the Little by Victor Hugo. He read it in bald translation, and two-thirds of what he read was beyond his comprehension. But, in spite of that, he was inthralled, and, hungry as he was, his mother called him twice or thrice from the darkened interior of the house before he could tear himself away from the printed page and the last lingering touch of rainy twilight to attack his scanty meal.

CHAPTER III

The winter weather was not always disagreeable at Koollala. Sometimes the snow-clouds would slowly and lingeringly detach themselves from the last spur of the Alps, and leave a white sprinkling on the ground, but this never lay there for more than an hour or two. Sometimes the "Southerly Buster" would rage through the bush, and set the giant trees moaning and shrieking for a day and a night together. But then, again, at times, the north wind, whose arid breath in summer made life an intolerable burden, would fan over the forest with balmy wing; and at such an hour it was a luxury to breathe the winter air. The spices which in summer burned and intoxicated grew purely exhilarating in the tempered cold, and many and many a day young Evan Rhys, with the indictment against Napoleon the Little tucked between his body and his dirty and tattered shirt, would steal off into the bush, and surrender himself to the wonder and mystery of an enchantment scarcely a tenth part understood. Napoleon the Little to his childish fancy was not very much more than an enlarged edition of a young Penthearn who wanted to say "Halloa" to every-body with impunity, and generally to have his own way, to the detriment of other people.

It was a queer book for a child to study, and it was read under queer conditions. A year ago, when young Evan, fresh from the West-England Frying-Pan, had found himself dumped down in this outlandish quarter, the bush had frightened him, and he had been afraid to venture a yard from any of the tracks cut through it. He had heard grewsome stories of children, and, for the matter of that,

of men and women, who had strayed away into that trackless labyrinth, and whose bones had been found, months, and perhaps years, after, within a few feet of the road they had abandoned. Familiarity with his surroundings had banished this fear, and by this time he dared to give himself a tolerable liberty. He was still in mortal dread of snakes, but so long as the cold weather lasted he could afford to banish that danger from his mind. So day after day, furnished with a hunch of bread, or one or two cold potatoes, he made off for a bower he had discovered, and there spelled over and over again, with an increasing sense of deeper meaning in it, the first book he had ever been allowed to read unchecked.

Meantime the outlandish pedler so curiously dropped down at Koollala stayed on there at the Frenchman's shanty. He was picking up English as a pigeon picks up peas, and before he had been there a week found himself master of a score or two of simple phrases. His pedler's pack was laid by, but his trade was not altogether abandoned, for his store of pins and needles, threads and cottons, tapes, buttons, writing-paper, pens, pencils, and other small odds and ends, was in fairly constant requisition among the members of the small settlement. He buckled to also, not without ardor, at such work as his companion could find for him—breaking ground for spring planting, chopping wood, or carrying water for household uses from the creek. The Comte de Montmeillard, as may be readily imagined, made no claim to his title in that wilderness. His Christian name of Edouard had been Anglicized and abbreviated into Ned. In his presence, or when people wished to be civil to him in his absence, he was called by that name. When people did not care to be civil, they called him Frenchy. But as a rule he answered to the generic hail of "Mate" or "Matey."

Little Evan sat one day reading in his bower. A great

eucalypt had been slowly lifted by the action of its roots until the base of the trunk stood seven or eight feet clear of the ground, forming a cave in shape like an inverted V. At the base the knotted roots ran into the rough semblance of an armchair, and here the youthful student might sit, sheltered from all winds but one, and that one the warmest. The bush swarmed with harmless life about him. Now and then a great gray kangaroo would go by him like a ghost, and now and again a wallaby, with his helpless-looking fore-paws dangling before him, would sit on his tail to stare at a strange species, and would be off again with a ten-foot hop at the first movement the unknown animal made. Sometimes the bell-bird sounded his pure note, sometimes the swish of the whip-bird's strange voice would be heard ; then a cloud of chattering parrots would skim over the tree-tops like a flash, or a great lizard, looking for all the world as if he were clothed in wet oilcloth, would be seen, languid with the season, feebly sunning himself upon a slanting branch. At this time of year there was no pest of fly or mosquito, and no fear of snakes. The child was used to the harmless denizens of the wilderness, and if his boyish instinct urged him now and then to hurl a piece of rotten wood or a chip of bark at fur, feather, or oilcloth, he would go back to his dreams or his scarce understood page again, and sit for hours in quiet.

At one such time he heard a faint and distant call. It was so very faint and far away that he was half inclined to think it no more than fancy, when it came again. He drew a full breath, and with all the force of his lungs sung out : " Coo-ee ! " Then he waited, and in a while he heard the call again. This time he thought it sounded a little nearer. Again he answered, and again the sound came nearer. So, with call on call, the wanderer, whoever he might prove to be, drew nearer, until Evan could hear the noise of his footsteps crackling through the dry under-

growth. Another call, and the adventurer came in sight. It was no other than the Russian pedler, and at the first sight of him it was evident that he had been in difficulties. His face and hands were scratched with briars, and his poor garments were torn in half a dozen places. He was bareheaded, and his hair and beard were in wild disorder, and studded grotesquely with twigs and leaves. His eyes were still wide and wild with recent fright, and, though the day was crisp and cool, the perspiration streamed from his face as if it had been dipped in water.

"Halloa, Matey!" said young Evan. "You've been lost."

"Lost!" said the Russian, passing his trembling hands across his face with the look of a man newly awakened. "Yes, I am lost. You——"

"No," said young Evan, "I ain't lost. 'Tain't so easy to lose me about here. You've had a scare, my word!"

"You safe?" asked the foreigner, with a pause between each word. "You know your way?"

"You bet!" said Evan Rhys.

Whether the man understood the words or no, he fathomed the meaning. He took a place upon the tree-root from which the boy had risen a few minutes earlier, and sat gingerly pulling out the thorns which stuck in the back of his hands, breathing hard all the time like a man who has run himself to a stand-still. By and by he became aware of the condition of his hair and beard, and began to comb them with his fingers.

"You good boy," he said. "I forget not."

"I heard you give a chi-hike," said Evan, "but you was so far off I wasn't sure. You shouldn't go into this 'ere bush alone," he added, with an air of fatherly expostulation, "not unless you know it. I don't ever go anywheres without being sure of the road back."

The foreigner looked and nodded, and smiled in rather a ghastly manner.

"Good boy," he said again. "I forget not. Go home now?"

"All right," said young Evan. "I can put you on to the track. You'll be all right then."

He stooped to pick up the book, which, on his first rising to listen to that distant voice, he had cast upon the ground. He was about to tuck it away beneath his shirt when the Russian laid a hand upon his wrist. Evan surrendered the book, and the pedler looked at it with a quaint lifting of the eyebrows.

"You read?" he said, and then, failing to find the words he wanted, tapped the volume with an illustrative finger. Evan, with both hands in his pockets, nodded. "That is droll," said the foreigner, in his own tongue, "but it will do for a beginning."

He surrendered the volume to the boy's care, and Evan, with an assured footstep, led the way. In five minutes they were on the rutted track to the settlement.

"That's the road," said Evan, pointing. "You'll be there in ten minutes."

"Good boy," said the pedler, a third time. "I forget not."

Evan went back to his woody grotto, and the pedler walked briskly toward the settlement, and made straight for his comrade's house. The Comte de Montmeillard, in moleskin trousers, unblacked boots, a Crimean shirt, and a shapeless wide-awake, was on his knees on the stilted veranda. His sleeves were turned up above the elbows, and with his right hand and arm he was gravely stirring up a mash of sharps and water for the mid-day refreshment of his pigs, who were already loud in reminders of the hour.

"Halloa!" he said, looking up, and noting his com-

rade's condition, "you've been in the wars. What is the matter?"

"I have been lost," Petrovna explained. "I have been lost in the forest. Until I got back to the track, and could see the sun again, I thought I had been lost for hours."

He detailed his adventures, and told how he was just coming to despair when the boy's call had answered to his own.

"And what do you think that child was doing there?" he asked dramatically.

"How should I know?" asked the Comte de Montmeillard, drawing his arm and hand from the stodgy mess he had prepared. He rolled up a little pill of the mess between finger and thumb, and, slipping it between his white teeth, looked up at his guest. "What was he doing?"

"He was reading," said the pedler, with a laugh—"he was reading 'Napoleon le Petit,' by Victor Hugo. I was not able to ask how much he understood of it, but I should like to know. You must teach me English, my friend," he added; "I should like to talk with that boy."

"I will teach you English, my dear Petrovna," the count answered, "with all the pleasure in the world. Just take up that bucket yonder, and pour slowly into this mess while I stir it."

Petrovna obeyed this behest, and the count, having brought the swill to a proper consistency, gravely marched off with it to the pigsty, where the clamor of appetite rose to an ecstasy at his appearance.

"And now," said Petrovna, at his return, "let us get to English. Let us, above all, be scientific. Let us begin with the verbs. Your only safe groundwork for a foreign language is the verbs."

"Brigadier," responded the Comte de Montmeillard flippantly, "vous avez raison."

The two lit their pipes, Petrovna took up pencil and paper, and the count, lying at lazy length upon his bed, prepared to dictate. Before nightfall Boris Petrovna had safely packed away in that piled-up attic of a head a dozen English verbs. He pored over them all the evening by the light of the paraffine lamp, and went to sleep repeating them.

He had a natural genius for languages, and in a fortnight he could make some headway through the shoals and quicksands of an English newspaper paragraph. At this period he became talkative, and would hold lengthy conversations with the inhabitants of the settlement. He insisted upon making his comrade speak English, and nothing but English, in their daily intercourse, and, though at first translation was pretty often necessary, he made astonishing strides.

Spring came slowly up that way. It was full September, and sun and wind were bright and treacherous, when young Penthearn and Evan Rhys the younger again encountered. The juvenile aristocrat was riding by on his pony, and would have passed in silence. If young Evan had known every thing that hung upon silence at that moment, he would have let him go, but he could not resist the temptation to be domineering in his turn. He swung upon his heel, and sent a contemptuous shout of "Halloa!" after the cavalier, who was already half out of earshot. The blood of the Penthearns awoke.

"Who are you calling after?" shouted the latest scion of the name.

"You," said Evan.

The insult was complete and formal.

"Wait till I tie up my pony," said Master Penthearn, riding back full heat.

"Oh," said young Evan, "I'll wait."

The prestige of victory was with Evan the younger, and

the sting of defeat rankled in little Penthearn's heart. The one was pretty certain of a renewal of victory, and the other as certain of a repetition of disaster. The young gentleman was pale, but he was not going to be afraid because he was, in all probability, going to be beaten. He was here, as it were, for execution, and prepared to meet fate with all the courage he could command; but children are like savages in the impulse to brag, and as a savage trussed for torture will shout his own glories in the teeth of enmity, so young Penthearn turned upon Evan.

"You haven't got a pony," he said. Evan took off his jacket, determined to avenge that circumstance along with others. "And if you had," young Penthearn added, "you couldn't ride him, nor yet you dare not try."

"All right," said Evan; "I'll ride him home for you. You'll have to walk, see if you don't."

There was a new fight, and an old result. Even Homer can grow tedious with the story of oft-repeated battle, and the records of "Fistiana" have no more variety after many years of reading. One wearies of the fact that the Chicken countered smartly, landing on the right ogle, or that the Pet got home heavily on the bread-basket. The eternal fact that one or the other, or both, came up smiling and looking dangerous palls on the intelligence of the student of past manners. Let the fact, then, be recorded with all brevity: the fight was fought, and poverty won it. The little Penthearn, who had been taught, and who believed with all his soul, that a boy of good breeding was worth two of the commonalty, was staggered anew by this result, alike in mind and body. But the young Evan fulfilled his threat, and, mounting the pony, rode him home, right to the slip panel of Mr. Penthearn's home paddock. There he turned him loose, and, with a sounding smack on the haunches, sent him galloping toward the house.

The empty saddle told a tale of disaster to the Penthearn

household, and the boy was sought for far and near. He came home afoot, a dismal spectacle, an hour and a half after the pony's arrival, while his father, with all the run-riders and rouseabouts within call, was scouring the country after him. The squire came home after sunset, and, finding the boy safe, gave him a good, sound, fatherly hiding for having been again beaten by young Evan, and sent him to bed.

None the less, the squire's wrath burned. In his own way he was as good a fellow as might be found. That he was choleric was a fault of blood. That he was domineering was a fault of breeding. That he hated Evan Rhys and all who bore his name was a fault of education and custom. Evan Rhys's father in far off Merionethshire had been a thorn in *his* father's side, and when Squire Penthearn, growing poorer year by year at home, and finding it year by year more difficult to make both ends meet, had resolved to expatriate himself, he learned with passion that his old enemy had settled himself with all his old discontent, and his accustomed sullen rebellion, within five miles of his gates.

Had it been daylight when the news of this last outrage reached him, he would have ridden to Koollala at once, and would have had his quarrel out with Evan Rhys in one way or another. As it was, the road being dark and dangerous in darkness, and he being pretty well tired already, he went to bed and slept upon his anger, with no very good result as things turned out. His morning's resolve was to treat "that fellow out there" with contempt, to forbid his boy from wandering in the direction of Koollala, and to let the matter slide. Yet, day by day, while he mused, the fire burned, and, on the whole, Squire Penthearn was much more likely to be dangerous to himself and others because of the very self-repression he exerted.

Nobody ever knew quite clearly how the fatal business came about, and it is quite possible that, even if Penthearn himself had survived, the story would have been very much left in darkness. The people of Koollala went on quietly planting their meagre crops, eating their meagre meals, and watching the last potentiality of misery as it came nearer, week by week, until at last full summer blazed down upon the whole country. The hot winds beat pitilessly from the north, the sun flamed like some unbelievable jewel in a white sky, the yellow sunset saddened night by night over every thing for a brief quarter of an hour or so, and then the darkness, charged with a heat more oppressive even than that of mid-day, swept to the zenith and beyond. The turbid waters of the creek had all run down to the ocean long ago, and now only here and there a rocky pool remained.

One night Evan Rhys the elder, who had tramped, starting at early dawn, to Manchester, a score of miles away, and, starting back at four o'clock in the afternoon, had tramped home, entered the shanty with a pale and excited face. He said nothing, and when his wife ungraciously pushed across the table the tin plate containing his evening meal, he pushed it back again. His wife noticed, at first with no surprise, that the hand which removed the untasted dish grasped a broken stick of some sort. But, the ponderous fist resting on the table, she made out by and by that the stick was not of common wood, but of a delicately painted malacca, and that the handle was of buckhorn, bound to the cane by a mount of silver.

"What 've you got there?" she asked.

Her husband, looking at her, caught the direction of her eye, and flung the thing to the ground savagely. She picked it up, and by the light of the candle saw that her own hand was red. One end of the stick was broken to

a jagged point, and there for two or three inches it was half caked and half glutinous with blood.

"Where did you get this?" she asked, in a frightened whisper.

"I proke it on his lying head," said Evan Rhys. "I peat him on his wicked body as long as it would hold."

"You'll be in trouble over this," said his wife.

"I haf been in trouble about many things," said Evan Rhys. "I haf been in trouble all my life."

There was a dreadful stir in all the countryside. Mr. Penthearn of Merioneth Station was missing. Nobody had seen him for a day or two. There was no reason to be assigned why he should have gone away, and every enquiry that was set on foot failed to hit the mark. Rhys went about his work in his ordinary fashion, and his wife, shaken with horrible tremors and suspicions, burned the malacca cane, and stirred the fire again and again until even the silver band was a cinder, and the buckhorn handle an unrecognizable bit of charred bone.

The young Evan, whose ears had scarcely been touched by the news, if at all, was afoot one radiant morning with a volume of Orr's "Circle of the Sciences" tucked for safety in his waistband. He had borrowed the book from Sandy Quahar, a neighboring Scot, with some reputation for humor and a turn for letters, and he was away, for the first time for a month, to make acquaintance with his new treasure in his old haunt. He chased an opossum some thirty or forty yards from his accustomed track, and on a sudden, right at his feet, arose an enormous cloud of flies. He started back and stood with a feeling of terror for which he could have given no reason even to himself. The cloud of flies settled down again, thick and black, but he saw and recognized the watch-chain and the bunch

of seals which had always been a part to him of the figure of Squire Penthearn. There was a sickly poison in the air, and a no less sickly terror in his heart. He ran till he could run no longer, and by sheer hazard fell face downward on the track which lay between Merioneth Lodge and Koollala.

CHAPTER IV

On the open track the sun blazed intolerably. Little Evan gathered himself up after his fall and ran. But he had scarcely gone a score of yards further when something seemed to take him at the throat from the inside and he began to sob terribly. The clutching hand at his throat took his breath away, but he stumbled homeward somehow, with all his raiment sticking to his body. When he came in sight of the home shanty, his mother was sitting with folded hands on the veranda, nursing her own angry and disappointed temper in the shade. The sound of young Evan's blubbering reaching her ears, she turned wrathfully. A child's trouble was an instant cue for punishment. The poor soul had been maternal once after a fashion, but a life of grinding poverty had soured her temper.

"What's the matter now, ye gurt brabblin' oaf?" she demanded.

Evan came stumbling on, and climbed the little ladder which led to the veranda.

"The squire——" began Evan, but a sob made the words inaudible.

His mother shook him fiercely by the shoulder. "What have yew got to howl about?" she asked.

"The squire——" gasped Evan, and this time she heard the words, and fell back with a face as white as death. Her mouth opened and stayed open, showing half a dozen rugged gaps where the teeth had fallen away. Something clicked audibly and harshly in her throat twice or thrice, but at last she spoke, with a tremendous effort and a

ghastly attempt at unconcern. This, following on the evident horror with which she had greeted the first mention of the name, alarmed the terrified boy still further.

"What about him?" asked Mrs. Rhys.

"He's lying in the bush a mile from here. He's dead. He's all over flies, and——"

Before Evan knew what had happened his mother felled him with one brawny hand, and with the other had dragged him inside the shanty. She landed him roughly on his feet, and slammed the crazy door with a vigorous motion of her foot. A dilapidated old blanket, soaked in water, had been tacked across the empty window-frame, so that now the room was dark, except for one or two piercing arrows of light which found their way through chinks in the wall and door.

"You young imp!" said the mother, in an awful whisper, "what do you mean by it? What do you mean by coming höam with a taäl like that!"

The unexpected assault and the sudden change from light to darkness, coming on the child'so riginal terror and distress, left him not only speechless, but empty of sensation.

"You've been a-dreamin', you have," said Mrs. Rhys. "You've been and fell asleep in that there bush, and you've had a nightmare. Don't you never let me hear no more o' that nonsense. Do you hear me, now?"

"But he was there," said the boy. "I see him a-lyin' on his back, with the flies on him as thick as——"

The mother's heavy hand came down again, but he evaded it.

"Don't you let me hear no more of that cussid rubbidge," she said, still speaking in the same harsh whisper.

Ever since he could remember young Evan had been at war with a cruel and unreasoning authority, but he had

never felt so indignant against it as he now began to feel. He dodged to reach the other side of the heavy table, but, tripping over a bucket, which was invisible in the thick twilight, fell headlong. But before his mother, whose eyes were as little accustomed to the darkness as his own, could seize him he had crawled under the table, and had found a refuge on the other side. Rebellious anger was fast driving out the terror by which he had been first assailed, and he could command his voice again.

"Don't talk to me about rubbidge and nightmares," he cried, at the top of his shrill voice. "The squire's a-lyin' in the bush. I seen him. I was within a yard of him. What 've ye got to knock me about for? It wasn't me as killed him."

"Evan," said his mother, in a horror-stricken whisper, "Evan, hush!"

"Very well, then," said Evan, in a lower voice. "What do you want to punch my head for? I 'on't stand it. I'll go away and drownd myself in the crick fust."

"Evan, dear," said his mother, "Evan, darling, I never meant to strike you. It was being surprised like as made me do it. But don't yew never speak a word about it. Now, don't 'ee! don't 'ee! don't 'ee!"

"Very well," said Evan, content with truce, obtained on what terms soever. "But don't you smack my 'ead no more for nothin'. I 'on't have it, and so I tell you."

"No, no, Evan, dear," the woman whined. "I 'on't do it never any more. But, Evan, dear, don't yew never say a word about that there ghastly fancy. Yew haven't seen nothin', and ye know ye haven't."

She began to coax him, and would have fawned upon him, but that the boy, mistrusting strategy, evaded her, and kept to his own side of the table. They were both so occupied that neither heard the footstep of Evan Rhys the elder as he mounted the rickety steps and strode across

the veranda. He pushed the door open with his foot, and let in a sudden stream of light.

"It iss you for darkness," he said, wiping the perspiration from his brow with the back of his big tanned hand.

"I can't abide that there glare," his wife answered. "I'm just a-goin' to send our Evan on a errand. Look 'ere, Evan,"—she drew him from the room on to the veranda, and whispered to him hastily,—"if your father was to know what you've been talkin' about, he'd skin yew alive. Now, don't yew make any mistake about that. He'd skin y' alive. Now, yew run and play anywheres you like, there's a good boy, but don't you speak a word about that there notion o' yours, not if you sets a vally on your life."

Young Evan, mightily bewildered by it all, gripped the veranda bar and swung himself to the ground. The broad, bright, desolate sunshine flamed everywhere. The familiar section of the bush repelled him. He had no mind to face again the palpable horror which lay hidden in its quiet and rarely trodden solitude. He made his way down to the creek, and, having there, with some difficulty, found a shadowed hole deep enough to bathe in, he stripped and plunged into the clear, tepid water. There were at first too many emotions working in his mind for any one of them to be dominant and steadfast. The tumbled chaos of thought and feeling consisted mainly of three elements : terror, anger at injustice, and mere wonder. Anger died first, and then wonder and horror remained behind. Why should his mother have been so terrified and angry at the mere mention of the squire's name ? Why should what he knew to be a fact be treated as if it were nothing more than a dream ? And if it had been only a dream, why should he have to be so strenuously forbidden to speak about it to any body ? Of course the thoughts of a child not yet eight years of age take no

such settled form as this, but this in the main was the upshot of young Evan's reflections. Finally even the wonder died, and nothing but the horror remained behind, and in that there was a certain sort of invitation. The ghastly thing called out to him, and he felt as if there were something like a compulsion upon him to go and look at it. He could see it clearly enough, in all conscience, in mere fancy. He had never been worth much in his life, but, poor as he was, he had his little hoard of boyish treasures, and he would have given them all never to have set eyes upon it. He not only had no wish ever to see it again but he shrank from it with absolute loathing and blank terror, and yet it seemed to draw him toward itself imperatively.

He got out of his tepid bath, and sat a while upon a sheltered shelf of rock to dry. Then he dressed idly and lingeringly, resolving all the while that he would avoid his old section of the bush altogether, and prospect for a new bower in a different direction. The fallen gum-tree still formed a bridge across the creek, and the whole unexplored country beyond that boundary lay open to him. He would try that side, and, so thinking, he arose and scrambled back into the full glare of the sunshine. Then he changed his mind ; it was too hot to go anywhere just then ; he would saunter home and go to sleep on the shady side of the house in the little garden patch. But by the time he had reached his father's shanty he had changed his mind again. He was not going near It, but he would wander a little way along the bush track. The horror of the morning began to get hold of him once more, and for the first time in his life the bush looked desolate and fearful to him. He stood balanced between a dreadful fear and a curiosity as dreadful. There was not a soul in sight. There was not a sound to be heard but the ceaseless and monotonous drone of countless insects. He tore a branch

from a low-growing shrub and beat away the swarm of flies which surrounded him as he moved. They brought to mind the sight he had seen, and he shuddered anew to think of it.

"I 'ouldn't go nigh there again," he said aloud, half frightened at the sound of his own voice—"I 'ouldn't go a-nigh it not for a 'undred million thousand pounds."

Yet he went on, horribly afraid and horribly curious. He entered the bush at the accustomed spot, where his childish feet had long since made a faintly perceptible track, and, terror tugging at his very soul, took his familiar way with halting footsteps frequently arrested.

Then the Thing began to be quite suddenly everywhere about him. He could have walked unhesitatingly to where it lay could he have found the courage, and yet in some mysterious fashion he felt it behind him, before him, and on either side of him at once. It lurked in every shadow of the gloomy woods. It took all manner of strange attitudes. He saw the face, but it never wore the same expression for an instant. It was angry, it was smiling, it was unconcerned, it writhed in some unspeakable torment.

If young Evan could have broken free of his own terrors, he would have raced from the spot, but he felt rooted there, as if he had been in a nightmare. Suddenly there was a rustle. A wallaby hopped across the trail, and the terror he inspired broke the meshes of that magnetic net which had seemed closing round the boy's heart. Young Evan turned and fled again, nor stopped until he was once more in sight of home.

He lingered about, not caring, for some unknown reason, to enter. On the unshaded side of the house the weatherboard burned the hand which rested on it. The house was roofed with a thick, tarred felt, and this sizzled in the sun, giving forth a peculiar disagreeable odor of its own.

Not a soul was astir about the whole settlement. All the waters of the duck-pond had long since evaporated, and the bed gaped with thirsty fissures. To the fancy of the moment there seemed something more friendly in winter's cold and rain than in this unwinking sunlight and this sweltering heat.

The silence was broken by a distant jingle, and presently there rode into the clearing a man attired in well-fitting cord breeches, a red flannel shirt, and a slouched hat. Round his waist went a broad belt, from which hung a revolver-case of time-stained leather. A rifle hung at his back, and he was solidly but neatly booted and spurred. While young Evan gazed at him in some astonishment, the man paused, turned, and looked back on the bush road from which he had just emerged. Then came another jingling sound, and two men, clad precisely like the first comer, joined him. The first figure had been sufficiently striking to the boy's inexperienced eye, but the three together made quite a show, and filled him with an agreeable wonder. They were all dressed precisely alike. Then the horses they rode were all pretty much of a size, and the men were all three weather-tanned, close-cropped about the head, and heavily mustached and bearded. At the first glance they were so much alike that all three might have come from the same mould, and have been colored from the same palette. They held a moment's conversation, and then rode forward together abreast. One of them hailed young Evan.

"I say, you boy! is this Koollala?"

"Yes," said Evan.

"There's a man living here," said the spokesman of the trio, "named Evan Rhys. Which is his house?"

"This is it," said young Evan, pointing.

"Any body in?" the man asked.

"Father and mother's both at home," said Evan.

"Oh," said the man, and, taking up a handful of his great beard, bit at it for a second or two in silence, regarding the boy meanwhile. "You'd better run away and play, my lad," he said at length, but Evan was too inspired by curiosity to follow this advice, and waited to see what might happen. The man took no further notice of him, but, riding up to the veranda, struck one of the uprights supporting the roof with a stout switch he carried. "House, there! Evan Rhys, you're wanted. Keep a lookout on the back, Bill," he said, addressing one of his companions.

The man to whom this order was given moved quietly so as to command a view of the rear of the shanty, keeping his comrades in sight meantime. Evan Rhys appeared upon the platform.

"Good-afternoon, mate," he said quietly. "You want to speak to me?"

"If you're Evan Rhys," the other answered.

"I am Efan Rhys."

"Very well," said the cavalier. "You've got to be careful what you say. Where was you last Monday?"

"I wass here in the morning," said Rhys. "Then I walked to Manchester, then I wass here again at night."

"You walked back?"

"Yess, I walked back."

"Then you crossed Merioneth Station?"

"Yess," said Evan Rhys, "I crossed Merioneth Station."

"Did you see Mr. Penthearn?"

"I did," said Evan Rhys.

"Oh, you did, did you?" asked the spokesman, looking right and left at his two comrades, and again gathering his beard in a great handful, and biting at it for a silent second or two. "Well, now, you've got to be careful."

"I haf not got at all to be careful," said Evan Rhys.

"Did you speak to him?"

"I spoke to him."

"Well, now, look here," said the horseman, after an uncertain pause, "fair play's a jewel. You know what we are, I suppose," nodding his head at his comrades left and right.

"Oh, yess," said Rhys; "you pelong to the police at Manchester."

"You know that Mr. Penthearn's been missing since Monday night."

"Oh, yess," said Rhys, "I have been tolt that."

"Well, now, if you like," said the horseman, "you can go ahead and spin any kind of yarn you please, but if I was you, between man and man, I should say nothing. Any thing you do say it will be my duty to repeat after you in the proper place. You know where that is, I suppose?"

"Oh, yess," said Rhys, "I know where that iss."

"It's known far and wide," said the horseman, whom even young Evan now began to recognize as an officer of police, "that Mr. Penthearn and you have been quarrelling like blazes ever since he came to settle down here. You're the only man as is known to have nursed any grudge ag'in him. He's been missed now since Monday, and naturally, don't you see, suspicion points at you. I shall ask you to come along with me, and if I was in your place I shouldn't say another word."

"Fery well," said Rhys, "I don't want to say any thing."

"You'd better make up a bit of a swag," said the officer, "if you want to be comfortable—a shirt or two. Odds and ends like that."

"All right," said Rhys, "I'll be pack in a minute."

He was to all appearance perfectly unmoved, and seemed

to take no account of the dreadful charge which was hanging over him. His wife, who had heard every word of the colloquy, sat upon the side of the untidy bed, with her apron thrown over her face, and rocked herself to and fro without a sound. Little Evan stood in the sunlight, staring from one horseman to another. He understood every thing now quite clearly. The body that lay in the bush a mile away, with that thick crowd of flies black about it, had been robbed of life by his father's hand. He was so shaken by horror at this thought that he began to laugh. He was very young, but not too young to know that at such a moment laughter would look altogether shameless and heartless in its levity, but for the life of him he could not restrain himself. The three mounted men turned and stared at him in amazement.

"You're a nice young cub, you are," said the nearest man, and, stooping from his saddle, cut him smartly across the back with the switch he carried. A sudden bitter sense that the blow was undeserved—that, and the pain of it, and the sense of shame, changed the current of his feeling in a second, and he burst into a loud weeping.

"That's changed your tune, has it?" said the officer contemptuously. "You get out of my reach or I'll give you something more to howl for." Young Evan cast himself on the ground, hiding his face, and muffling his sobs in the sleeves of his ragged jacket. "Pretty tender hide *you've* got," pursued the horseman, more contemptuous than before.

Young Evan could have spoken no word to defend himself even if he would. His heart writhed under the unmerited insult.

Indoors his father packed up a small bundle in a red handkerchief, and left the house without a word of farewell. His wife still rocked herself upon the edge of the

bed, with her rough red arms folded across her breast, and her face hidden in the folds of her coarse apron. As Rhys appeared on the veranda the senior officer dismounted from his horse, threw his reins to a comrade, and produced a pair of handcuffs from his pocket. Rhys set the knot of his little parcel between his teeth, and held out both hands.

"It's a longish tramp into Manchester," said the policeman, as he adjusted the handcuffs, "and you can have a lift from time to time. To begin with, you'd better march in front." He slung his rifle into an easier position, and struck the butt of it solidly with his hand. "You know what to expect if you come any hanky-panky."

"I know what to expect," said Rhys, as dispassionate as an echo. "I shall co straight. Good-py, my little Efan." He knelt down by the boy's side, and took him in his manacled hands.

"You needn't bother about him, matey," said the one man who had hitherto kept silence. "It's d——d little he cares."

"You're a liar!" flamed Evan, springing to his feet. "You're a liar!" He stood palpitating after this outbreak, unable to speak a word, but, throwing himself upon his father's breast with a loud cry, he hung there, and could hardly be removed without violence.

"I think you are mistook, Bill," said the leader.

"Looks like it," answered the man addressed. "I've been took that laughing way myself when I felt a sight more like crying."

Rhys rose to his feet, picked up his fallen bundle, and set out for the bush road at a sturdy pace. The three horsemen went jingling leisurely after him, and soon disappeared from sight. None of the widely scattered neighbors had witnessed this strange scene, though had they

known it not one of them would have missed such a break in the weary monotony of life.

Young Evan was down upon his face again, stilling his sobs to listen to the fading noises of the little cavalcade. The sounds grew fainter and fainter, and finally died away.

CHAPTER V

Rhys tramped on sturdily for a mile or thereabouts, and then stopped short so abruptly that the nearest horseman almost walked him down.

"It wass here," he said, turning, "here, or hereapouts."

"Now, you've been warned already," said the spokesman of the party. "If you like to give a slack to your jaw, you must, and it's no part of my duty to stop you."

"Fery well," said Rhys, "I shall tell you all about it." The other, surrendering opposition, struck a lucifer match on the tightened leg of his cords, lit his pipe, and listened with a motionless countenance. "I met Penthearn," said Rhys, "at the slip-rail in the big paddock. We had had a goot many rows, and he wass ready for one more. I wass ankry enough to do him a mischief, and I would not speak a word. The more I would not speak, the more he wass in a rage. That pleased me, and I would not say a word. So he followed me to about here, apusing me all the way, and then he struck me with his riting-stick. Then," said Rhys, with no sign of heat or excitement, "I thrashed him ass long ass he could stand. I proke the stick across his body, and I came away."

"Is that all you've got to say?" asked the mounted policeman.

"That is efery thing," Rhys responded.

He moved on again without waiting for an order, but before another hundred yards had been traversed one of the men called a halt, and dismounted hastily.

"This looks a bit like it," he said, carefully examining

the ground about him. "There's been a bit of a turn up here."

Fifty years ago,—and a good deal more or less,—the belief in the ability of the aboriginal native to read "sign" amounted to a superstition. There is no doubt at all that a great many of the black fellows were very clever at this sort of work, and until the white man learned the trick a good deal of their work looked almost miraculous. To this day the Australian police employ black trackers to follow criminals who have taken to the wilderness, though there are by this time dozens of white men who are fully equal to any black fellow that ever breathed. This man, by name Ned Cooper, was one of them. He was a currency lad, born in the bush, and bred there. He had spent two-thirds of his life among the aboriginals, and knew every thing they could teach him. He had as quick an eye as any one of them, and a keener intelligence.

He stood looking downward for a minute, directing his sharp glance here and there, and at last fixed on a place at the edge of the track, and there knelt down to see things closer. Then he rose and walked into the bush.

"Track's as plain as blazes!" he called, when he had gone perhaps twenty yards.

"Come out of that," returned the leader. "We've no time to fool about here. We shall have a good three hours in the dark as it is."

"Wait a bit!" bawled the tracker. "He's foundering already, staggering about like a drunken man. He can't have got far in that state."

"I left him here," said Evan Rhys. "What should he want to go into the push for?"

"One man's tracks or two?" shouted the leader of the police party.

"One," replied the tracker, invisible by this time, and his voice muffled by the intervening trees.

"Carrying any body?" cried the leader.

"No," said the other, and so went on again.

The horses pawed the road, jingled bit and curb-chain, and snorted now and then, but in the perfect silence which came between these sounds they could still hear the crackle of the retreating footsteps. At length, and the time of waiting was not great, a long-drawn, melancholy sounding "Coo-ee" soared from the bush. The leader answered the call, and it was repeated.

"He's found something," said the man called Bill. "Wants us there, I fancy."

"You wait here," returned his senior, "and take care of the horses and this chap. I'll have a look."

He dismounted and went off into the wooded solitude, calling for guidance now and then, and pursuing the answering voice. Evan Rhys stood like a statue, with his little red bundle clasped between his pinioned hands; the horseman, with an unwavering eye upon him, sat like a statue, and the two waited. In a while the tracker returned, very pale and quiet.

"I want you," he said, "the pair of you."

He drew the bridles over the horses' heads, and, passing the reins twice or thrice about a fore-leg, left the beasts standing in the road, and walked into the bush. Evan Rhys went next, and the remaining policeman brought up the rear. A walk of barely two minutes brought them to the place. The senior of the trio had withdrawn a little apart, and was smoking violently, but a dozen yards off a ceaseless, monotonous buzz of wings and a black towering cloud of flies showed the whereabouts of what they had come to seek. The tracker took Rhys by the sleeve and led him forward.

"There you are, matey," he said. "No fair play ever did that, you know."

Rhys looked down upon what was left of his enemy.

His olive skin paled, but he gave no other sign of emotion.

"He iss dead?" he said.

"There's no mistake about that," one of the men answered almost brutally. "You'd better have held your jaw."

"I am not afraid of the truth," said Rhys. "I flogged him, but that iss all I did."

"You can keep that yarn for Manchester," the man responded.

"Look here," said the senior, addressing the tracker, "you'd better ride full tilt to Merioneth and let 'em know what you've found. They'll take it home. I'll go on as hard as I can split to Manchester, and get the doctor to ride over and look at the body. You can take care of that chap, Bill. He won't want more than one to look after him."

So said, so arranged. All four men came out of the bush pale and quiet. Two mounted at once, and rode away, and Rhys plodded sullenly along, followed by his escort. As they entered the big paddock, after a little more than half an hour's walking, the horseman saw a body of men hurrying toward him from the station. He distinguished his comrade among them, and as the men drew nearer he saw that they carried poles and blankets with which to make a litter for the dead man's transport.

The two parties crossed each other at a little distance, and Penthearn's men hooted the prisoner, who looked across at them with a face of anger and disdain.

Meantime Evan lay face downward in the dust, crying as if his heart would break. Nobody came near him. Nobody cared. He was alone in the world.

His father was the only living creature who had ever shown him a sign of affection, and, since love is sure to beget love in a child's heart, his father was the one

creature for whom he cared. His mother may have had love for him of a sort ; but she had grown bitter of temper, and was heavy-handed, and prone to avenge herself for any trouble she might encounter by passing her discomforts on to little Evan. And now his father had gone away to prison, and there was no kind face nor kind voice left him in the world.

While he lay thus abandoned to sorrow, he heard his mother's voice calling to him. But between himself and her there seemed at the moment to be nothing in common, and he made no answer. It did not occur to him to think that they suffered the same grief. He could not conceive of his mother as a sufferer, but only as an inflicter of suffering.

She called again ; but still he made no reply, and he did not even notice the mystery and urgency of her voice. She came near, and he hardened his heart for more injustice and cruelty. He was surprised when she laid a hand gently upon his shoulder, and strove softly by her touch to persuade him to rise.

"Evan, darling," she said, more gently than she had ever spoken to him before. "Evan, darling."

He had been lying face downward, with his closed eyelids pressed hard against his arm. The hot tears had forced their way, and his eyes were red and swollen. When he lifted his head, the sunlight blinded him, and he could make out nothing. But his mother saw the tear-scalded face, and the eyes which looked dim with a pain too great for so young a child to bear, and somehow her bruised heart stirred in her as it had not stirred for years. She sat down on the baked earth in the blazing sunlight, and took him, mother-like, in her arms. They cried together, and she rocked him as though he were a baby again.

This scene made so strangely vivid an impression on his mind that in after years it stood like a wall, or rather like

a bower of beneficent greenery, between him and the remembrance of his arid infancy. When he came to manhood, and looked back upon his baby days, he realized little of the neglect, and remembered hardly any thing of that atmosphere of blows in which he had lived. Had things gone on in the old way with him and his mother, had they even been long together after this reconciliation of their hearts in sorrow, they would have quarrelled anew, and would have suffered and inflicted injustice as of old. But this was not to be. The hard hand had fallen upon him for the last time, and his mother's voice was never again to address him except in accents of kindness and of heart-broken farewell. Neither of them guessed this, but for the hour their reconciliation was complete.

The brawny, strong-limbed woman rose with the boy in her arms, and carried him to the house as if he had been indeed a baby again, as for the moment her sorrow and pity made him seem. She sat down with him on the bed, rocking and soothing him. This was all new to Evan, and for a time he cried without restraint, being more moved by affection than he had been by grief and the loneliness of his own heart.

"Evan," said his mother at length, "hold your whist, my dear, do 'ee, now, do, there's a darlin' boy. We must do what we can to help your poor father. Hush your whist, Evan, and tell me, now, do yew think you'd know your way to that there thing in the coppice?"

She was English bred, and could never bring herself to speak of the Australian forest as the bush. She knew but two forms of congregated trees, coppice and spinney, and she chose the term which she thought the larger.

"Yes," said Evan, sitting up in her lap, and looking at her strangely, "I could find it. Why?"

"Are yew sure," she asked, "as you know to it proper? Could yew take me there, and make no mistake?"

"Yes," said Evan again. "Why?"

She set him on his feet with an air of complete, quiet resolution. She wiped her eyes with a corner of her coarse apron, as if tears were done with, and, rising, closed the door. Then, returning, she knelt down by Evan, and set a hand on either shoulder.

"If they finds that body," she said, in a matter-of-fact voice, "they'll hang your father. We've got to save un, Evan, and if you can guide me there, we'll do it. Yew go and get the pick and the shovel."

"We'd better wait till night-time," said Evan.

"No," said his mother, "I couldn't abide to wait a minute, and beside that us'd have to carry a lantern, and that 'ud look suspectious. Nobody 'ull notice if us goes out now. And, for the matter o' that," she added, after pausing to lift the curtain and to peep rapidly about the space outside, "there's nobody about. Come along, Evan. It's a ghashly job, an' the Lord send us the heart to get through with it."

She put on a great old-fashioned sun-bonnet by way of sole preparation, and Evan, without a word, went round to the back of the pigsty, where he found a battered old shovel and a mattock with a broken handle. He shouldered these, and set off for the bush track accompanied by his mother. Each looked nervously around, but their going was unobserved.

Broad daylight as it was, they walked in terror. They were afraid alike of observation and of the task which lay before them, but they went on sturdily, and in silence, until they reached the track made by the boy's own footsteps. Here Evan took the lead, and they plunged almost at once from blazing light into deep shadow. The very undergrowth of the monstrous bush was thirty feet overhead, and the air felt muffled and confined. A black snake crossed the track, and the woman, stooping with a harsh

shriek, gathered her skirts about her ankles, and stood trembling. The reptile glided on harmless, and in a while she found courage to go on again.

The whirling pillar of black flies rose with a startling suddenness as they came upon the object of their search. The woman screamed again, but Evan said gravely, and in the voice of every day :

" Here it is."

They looked down on the recumbent figure, scarcely recognizable for what it was, loathsome and distended. Within a very little distance of where it lay,—a yard or two only,—was a patch of sand, and on this they set to work. A few inches below the surface they came upon a thick tangle of roots, but they labored with all their might, scarcely pausing to take breath, and barely conscious of the sweat which poured from their brows like rain. They made slow progress in spite of all their labor. The air was a poison. The startled flies buzzed round them in myriads, and settled in the panting nostrils, on the parted lips, and assailed eyes and ears with constant irritation. They brought with them a sense of unconquerable loathing, but the pair worked on, digging, as each thought in ignorance, for the salvation of a husband and a father.

" Move together, boys ! " said a clear, loud voice, and the two laborers started upright. From every side of them, as it appeared, came the sound of a foot-tread from the undergrowth, and in a minute or less they were surrounded by half a dozen sturdy fellows. Among them was Cooper, the tracker. He had guided the party to the spot, and, hearing strange and unexpected noises as he drew close to it, had withdrawn a little, and had distributed his men in a circle, prepared to converge at the word of command toward a centre.

" That's Mr. Penthearn's body," said Cooper. "Some of you chaps can see to it. One of you can give me a hand

here. I shall have to trouble you to come along with me, missis, and you, too, youngster. You're Mrs. Rhys, I reckon ?" The woman looked at him like one fascinated, and breathed heavily. She made no answer, but he nodded, and said : "I thought so. The whole family's in it, seemin'ly. Here, let's get out of this—it's enough to poison the very flies. You take charge of the kid. Now, missis, I must trouble you to come with me."

One of the late Mr. Penthearn's casual hands took Evan by the collar, and marched him out of the wood. The woman obeyed the motion of the tracker's hand, and followed him, walking like one in a dream.

"We can't march this pair to Manchester," said Cooper, addressing the man in front. "One of you fellows will have to ride up there, and bring down a buggy."

Neither of the prisoners spoke a word. The man who had charge of young Evan relaxed his hold upon his collar as soon as the track was reached. The boy made his way to his mother's side, and stole a hand into hers. The mounted policeman lolled idly along in the saddle, smoking, and the unmounted man begged a fill of tobacco and a light from him. The station came in sight, and after a weary march was reached. Mrs. Rhys and the boy were locked away in an outhouse, safely secured on the outside. They waited there a long, long while, with nothing to say to each other, and too crushed by the turn affairs had taken even to think consecutively. They heard the dreadful burden they had attempted to bury borne home by men who staggered with fatigue.

"That job's worth a glass of beer, anyhow !" said a voice outside, and another answered :

"Beer be blowed ! I want a bottle of forty-rod to drown the flavor."

The men moved away, laughing and talking among themselves, and once more the two were left in a waiting

silence. It was growing dark when the wheels of a buggy came rolling along the pebbled roadway which had been laid down in front of the station. The folding doors of the barn were unlocked, and a man appeared carrying a tin dish and a jug of beer.

"You're not to be starved," he said roughly, and set the provisions on the floor of beaten earth between them. Neither had the heart to eat, though the mess in the pannikin smelled savory enough to have tempted appetite under ordinary conditions; but they both drank heartily, and young Evan was soon sleepy with the unaccustomed draught. Cooper lounged in, pipe in mouth, to take a look at his charges.

"It's fifteen miles to Manchester," he said, "and if you mean to make a meal at all, you'd better be quick about it. We're just waiting for a change of horses, and then we're off."

Neither of them answered, and he went on with a sort of rough commiseration in his tone:

"That was a foolish kind of thing to do, missis, if you'd only known it. I don't say as it wasn't natural, but, you see, it let you in as well. Makes you accessory after the fact, don't you see."

The woman neither understood nor cared. She had done what she could, and had failed. If she had as yet any feeling at all, she was not ill content to be taken in a common condemnation with her husband. She woke to one moment of emotion.

"They can't hurt the child," she said.

"Oh, the kid," said the officer. "No, I shouldn't think they'd hurt him. I shouldn't, any way. He's too young to be responsible."

She made the best of this crumb of comfort.

The yellow, mournful twilight was everywhere, flooding the sky north and east and south and west, when the

buggy, driven by an officer in the same informal uniform as his fellows, drew up at the barn-door. The two took their places, Cooper whistled for his horse and threw his leg leisurely over the saddle, and they set out in the gathering night. On these free uplands the air grew cool after sunset. The man in charge of the buggy drove fast, and the passage of the vehicle made a refreshing breeze. The wheels were almost soundless on the grass, and the vast, unbroken prairie faded and faded, contracted and contracted, until the brief twilight failed, and night rushed down. Then they whiled on through the dark, the trooper jingling along behind, ghost-like, his face in alternate red glow and shadow as he pulled away at his pipe. Then the moon got up, and cut every thing into clean light and shadow, and still they bowled along.

On a sudden the dim thud of the horse's feet and the noiseless spin of the wheels changed to a startling clatter, and there were houses on either side. Another hundred yards, and the journey was over.

A man in uniform trousers and a flannel shirt stood in the door-way under a swinging oil lamp. He received the party with oaths and grumblings, having, as it appeared, been kept away from some social engagement in order to receive the prisoners and enter the charge against them. The formality was speedily gone through, and Evan and his mother stood hand in hand, looking on and listening with no very intelligent apprehension. An officer tapped the woman on the shoulder.

"This way, missis." She moved mechanically, still holding Evan by the hand. "No," said the man. "The kid goes this way."

"You ain't going to part me and the child?" she said.

"That's your side," the man answered, "this is his."

CHAPTER VI

Someone took young Evan by the hand and led him, not unkindly, into another apartment. This chamber was furnished, or unfurnished, something after the manner of a military guardroom, that is to say that some three parts of its space were filled up by a great sloping plank bed with a wooden pillow. From the ceiling hung a sickly oil lamp, the flame of which rendered darkness barely visible, while its acrid and unpleasing odor made the air heavy. A solitary figure lay stretched on the plank bed, and a movement only just perceptible showed that Evan's fellow-prisoner was awake.

"You needn't cry, my little man," said Evan's guard. "You've got your father to take care of you," and at this the recumbent figure sat up suddenly.

"Efan!" cried the father, in a tone of wild surprise. "What prings you here?"

"Him and his mother," said the guard, "was found digging a hole for Mr. Penthearn's body. That's what he's here for."

The man retired, closing the heavy door behind him, and the two Rhys's, father and son, heard the grinding of solid and ill-fitting bolts before the man's footsteps retired. The boy was crying bitterly at the sight of his father here a prisoner. Rhys took him in his arms and lay down again, pillowing his head upon his shoulder. He said nothing, and after a long while young Evan, exhausted by his own grief, fell asleep.

In the morning came questionings, and Rhys learned by what accident the body had been discovered, and by what

a fatal desire to serve him his wife had been led into her present grave position.

"She meant well," he murmured to himself, "but she has put the rope round my neck, all the same."

The three prisoners were brought before the resident magistrate that morning, and after formal evidence were remanded for a week. The Australian summer days burned slowly one after the other, and the two for the most part lay sprawling on the comfortless plank bed in complete languor of mind and body. But now and then Rhys talked with extreme gravity, teaching the boy what little he knew in his own darkened mind of the polity of the great world. It was perhaps a good deal of a pity that a child should get such lessons as were there taught him. It was certainly a pity that such lessons should have been offered with so much authority and in such a place, for they were bitten into the young soul as if by the action of some corrosive acid, and so long as he lived he was bound to bear their scars inwardly, to carry them about with him like a message written in tears and fire and terror, legible and authentic to the limit of his days, ineradicable, ineffaceable, never to be forgotten for an hour. There was a prodigious amount of nonsense in this unfortunate teaching, but the mischief of it was that the nonsense had the sturdiest support from facts which were known familiarly both to pupil and teacher, and that thousands of other facts which should have gone to modify certainty were unknown to both.

"When your grantfather wass in Merionethshire," said Evan Rhys the elder, "he was a tenant of Squire Penthearn's father. He hat a little pit of land which hat been saved from the waste, Gott knows when. There wass nobody so old as could tell him when it hat not been farmland. Squire Penthearn wass the lord of the manor. Your grantfather hat no little piece of paper to show that he

had a right to the land, and the squire took it all. Your grantfather, and his grantfather, and his grantfather again, had made the land. Thay had worked perhaps for hundreds of years to make it. The squire wanted it, and he took it. Your grantfather was turned away, and got nothing whatever. They saidt it was the law. Fery well, my little Efan, it iss the law that all good people have to fight against. When the rich man shows a poor man a law, he shows him something that he has to fight, to worry with teeth and nails. You are quite safe, my little Efan ; they will do nothing to you, pecause you are too younk ; but when your father hass been hanked by the neck, and your mother hass been imprisoned for life, you will rememper."

The children of the very poor are precocious. There is nothing in the world which can give so early an edge to intellect as poverty. Look at any great city, and observe the prematurely mannish childhood of the poor. There are children in London, in New York, in Paris, in Vienna, in all great cities, who face the world with many devices of strategy, who contrive somehow to squeeze the water of life from the almost dry sponge of street charity and petty enterprises contrived without capital. The children of the rich would die, in spite of more delicate wit and a finer training, where these waifs of fortune flourish.

Young Evan was quick to absorb all his father's lessons, and nothing was too wrong-headed for acceptance. How should it have been so? There was not a fact in his own little experience of life which did not corroborate his father's theories.

"Suppose," said Rhys, "that efery tay of your life you robbed a pig of his cabbage-stalk, or you stole a saucer of milk from a puppy—would you expect the pig or the puppy to be thankful ? And we are not pigs or puppies, my little Efan, we are men and women, and they rob us every

day, and they expect us to co with our caps in our hands, and to say that we are fery much opliged for peing allowed to live at all."

Once, and once only, he talked of the charge which was to be brought against him.

"I nefer meant the man any mischief," he declared. "When I wass a little boy in Merionethshire, I peat him, as you have peaten his little boy. When he krew up, he remempered, and he wass always fery angry. He came after me threatening what he would do, and I knew it wass the safest way to make him angry to say nothing. I said nothing for two miles, and he followed me, and I did not care until he raised his riding-whip. Then I took it from him. I do not know why he iss dead, but I flogged him, and if he could die of a flogging he is welcome to die. And so am I welcome to die," he added, with a certain gloomy stoicism, "and to not you forget it. If I did not leaf my little poy in the cold, I should not care at all. I am very tired, my little Efan, and I am quite reaty to go whenefer."

The upshot of all the lessons learned was that every rich man was a rogue, and that every poor man was more or less a martyr, bound to rebellion. That the king was *per se* a knave was beyond dispute. That whole generations of one family of lords might be losels and wastrels, prodigal alike in plenty and in bankruptcy, Evan Rhys the elder unhappily knew by local tradition and the surety of his own eyes; and that all families holding the patent of nobility should be equally worthy of contempt and blame seemed an easy conclusion to arrive at both for him and his pupil. Everywhere the story repeated itself. The worker enriched the waste earth with his sweat, and fed its verdure at last in the decay of his body, and whosoever had money had it first or last by trickery or tyranny.

The gloomy little room in which these lessons were taught became to the boy a temple of intellectual freedom. The plank bed was an altar of revolt, and on it already lay the immolated figure of a father, at once a victim and a protest, a prey to social tyranny and a proclamation against it. At the next formal enquiry father and mother and child were alike committed for trial, but when the case was ready to come on for hearing before the higher court, the grand jury thought it absurd to bring so grave a charge against so young a child, and, although a true bill was found against Evan Rhys the elder and his wife, Helen, the boy was set at liberty. This, in its way, was a blow, for it left him alone in the world. He would not leave the prison in which his father was confined in the strange new town to which they had been carried until force was employed. He was borne out in the arms of a warder, and set down in the street outside the jail. He cried so piteously at leaving his father, and at the sense of his own loneliness, that the warder gave him the only half-crown he had in the world, and so sent him about his business. Under conditions entirely civilized it would have been made somebody's concern to see the child home, but the district was but newly and sparsely settled, and the administration of justice had not yet fallen into the groove in which it runs in older countries.

Two or three people staring at young Evan in the street made him ashamed of his open outburst of grief. He controlled himself as best he might, and walked away, intent on nothing for the moment so much as to hide himself. But, coming in a while upon the desert outskirts of the town, he threw himself upon the ground in complete surrender. The mere fact of yielding to his own grief bred a sort of hysteria, and a stranger passing that way was moved to astonishment and pity.

This stranger was a remarkable man in his way—the

Marquess of Avelchurch, son of the Duke of Kingsclere, a young man of great wealth and enormous expectation. He had taken his degree at Oxford five years before, and had since then occupied himself in travel and the study of mankind. He was a young man of supernatural gravity and solemnity of demeanor, a circumstance mainly due to the fact that he had been bred to as heavy a sense of responsibility as if he had been a prince of the blood. The fact that he was the Marquess of Avelchurch, heir to the dukedom of Kingsclere and a colossal fortune, had never been allowed for one moment to be absent from this unhappy young gentleman's mind. He was by nature a most lovable and high-spirited fellow, full of warm-blooded impulses and enthusiasms, and his childish dream, when he first became aware of the vast wealth which would one day be his own, had been to ride abroad distributing largesse to the poor. In his youth he would empty his purse at any moment in answer to a piteous tale, and he had been the prey of cads and cadgers past the computation of arithmetic. But when a lad so circumstanced has able tutors near him, when his study table is thickly littered at every post with begging letters, and when he has been compelled to enquire personally into some hundreds of cases, he grows hardened. The young Marquess of Avelchurch had learned years ago that his money was as likely to do a mischief to the people on whom he bestowed it as a benefit. He had been taught to dread, as a terror even greater than the pinch of poverty, the pauperization of the poor. He had been taught,—and he was of a nature to learn the lesson easily,—that his social position and his wealth laid tremendous responsibilities upon him. He held social position and wealth alike as a trust from God. He was an old-fashioned young man, and believed in God. The agnosticisms of modern Oxford had slid from him like water from a duck's back, and the old-fash-

ioned defenders of an old-fashioned faith found an enthusiastic disciple in the Marquess of Avelchurch. The only touch of modernity about the young man was to be found in the form and method of his hereditary Toryism. The old Toryism, though Lord Goodheart and Lady Bountiful tempered it by innumerable kindnesses, was scornful, held its head high, and rejoiced in the divisions which Providence had established among the races of men. The modern Toryism, as the Marquess of Avelchurch understood it, regretted the social partitions, and was yet bound to preserve them as part of a scheme with which it would be sinful to interfere. High-minded, honorable, generous, and so over-conscientious in giving and in refraining from giving that his life was an hourly burden to him, the young man had spent this last five years in travelling the world, and accustoming himself to think more and more basely and despairingly of it. He dragged at each remove a lengthening chain. The sense of responsibility grew like a snowball. To refuse charity was an insult to his heart ; to bestow it in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred seemed a crime. What, in these mournful circumstances, was a young man to do ?

Young Evan lay writhing there, in the sparse verdure of a waste field, like a worm that has been trodden upon. Childhood is keen to suffer—few people ever care to think how keen. And surely here, if ever in the world, a child had a right to be down-hearted. His father was going to the gallows, and his mother to penal servitude, and he, so far as he knew, had not a friend in the world. He was full, too, of that gall of bitterness which his father had of late days poured into him with so unsparing a hand. A child of eight despaired and loathed the world !

The Marquess of Avelchurch looked down on the writhing little body, and heard the sobs which seemed torn by the roots from the child's heart. By and by he stooped,

and laid a hand upon young Evan's shoulder. The boy looked up, savage in the desolation of his misery. His desert was sacred to him. He had a right to his solitude.

"Go away!" he snarled.

The marquess sat down beside him, and, let young Evan writhe as he would, he kept a firm yet gentle hand upon his shoulder.

"It can't be as bad as that, my lad," he said.

Evan ceased to cry, though the effort cost him dear. Every now and again a great shivering sob shook him from head to foot, but otherwise he lay quiet. He even ceased to resist the hand upon his shoulder, but he resented it with a passionate sullenness of which the intending comforter had not the faintest conception.

"Let me help you, my boy," said the marquess, kindly and gently enough, and yet with something in the tone which angered where it was meant to soothe. "What brings you in such trouble? Tell me what is the matter, and if I can help you I will."

The unfortunate young nobleman was always offering a sop to conscience. He was willing to help young Evan if he could, but if he could, meant if the case were deserving. To be conscientiously assisted by the Marquess of Avelchurch meant that you should have got into trouble absolutely without any fault of your own. The way of the transgressor was hard, and, though his good heart checked him painfully many a time, he solemnly felt it his duty to make it harder. In point of fact, what would have been his vice would have been virtue to ninety-nine men in a hundred. Had he done throughout his life the things which would have pleased him, he would have been universally beloved. As it was, he was almost universally respected, but by some regarded as a prig of the first water.

Young Evan made no answer to all this pleading, but lay

there in a stubborn silence, affronted at the intrusion on his grief.

Steps sounded on the rough gravel of the pathway, and the Marquess of Avelchurch, more than half ashamed on the better and more tender side of him, of being caught in the act of comforting this ragged urchin, rose to his feet.

"Quoi donc?" said a cheery voice. "Toi?"

The Comte de Montmeillard, in shabby serge trousers, a shabby jacket of the same material, and collarless Crimean shirt, was holding out a hand to him.

"You are here!" cried the count, "in Australia of all places in the world. Here, my friend, you will find plenty of food for your philosophies."

"The Comte de Montmeillard?" said the marquess.

"The Comte de Montmeillard, my dear friend, at your service. The Comte de Montmeillard—no longer the most illustrious of boulevardiers, but, as you behold him, an exile, my friend—an exile in the cause of that divine conscience which used to be so precious to you. Is it still so precious as it used to be, the divine conscience? For my own, I have given him the bridle-rein, and he has run me here, but I will sell him to any body who has need of him for a passage home and one little supper chez Bignon."

"I thought," said the marquess, "I understood——"

"Ah!" cried the count, "you supposed that I was in the New Caledonia—that Caledonia stern and wild, fit nurse for a rebellious child! I am here, my dear Avelchurch, what they call an *escapé*. The word is an insult to my native tongue, but I accept it."

"Have you no friends here?" asked the marquess. "No—no resources?"

"I grow a little garden," the count responded gayly. "I sometimes sell a little garden produce. I feed my pigs. Eh, Petrovna?"

The marquess for the first time became aware of a fourth figure on the scene, the figure of a shabby man with a pug nose and a great beard.

"I feed my pigs," cried the count. "I kill my pigs, I salt my pigs into hams and bacon, and therewith I buy my bread. I am a protest in favor of that aristocratic principle of which you are yourself so distinguished a pillar. But what is this, Petrovna? Here is our little Evan, for whom all day we have been enquiring everywhere."

He sat down with a vivid action on the grass, picked up the boy, and took him in his arms. Petrovna knelt beside him, and put one arm about the child's shoulder.

"I am glad," said the marquess, "that the little fellow has found his friends."

"He is in need of them," said the count.

"If I could be of service——" said the Marquess of Avelchurch. His hand moved irresolutely toward his pocket-book.

"To the boy without doubt," the count responded. "To me, my dear fellow, no. Take him, Petrovna," he added, handing over little Evan to his associate with scant ceremony. He rose to his feet, and, taking the marquess familiarly by the elbow, led him to a little distance. "You have been long in the town here?"

"Three or four days only," the other answered.

"At least," said Montmeillard, "you will have heard the news. That wretched little fellow there is the son of the man who is charged with the murder of Mr. Penthearn at Koollala. In a month or thereabouts the law will make an orphan of him. He is a bright boy, and full of promise. I would give the little devil a chance if I could."

"Come and see me at my hotel," said the marquess—"the Belleville. Ask——" He blushed a little here, and hung fire for a mere instant. "Ask for Mr. Johnstone."

"Oho!" said the count, "we travel incognito?"

"It saves a great deal of trouble," the marquess answered. "But, excuse me, who is that fellow with you? You called him——"

"Ah," responded Montmeillard. "He is not a pillar of order and respectability. That is Boris Petrovna, lately of Siberia. Shall I introduce him to Mr. Johnstone?"

"No, thank you," said the marquess dryly. "Come to me at the Belleville. Let us have a talk together. Will you dine with me to-night?"

"In this garb?" said the count, stretching his arms abroad, and flashing his white teeth in a smile.

"Why not? Come in any dress you like."

"Very well," the count answered cheerfully. "I will come in the only one I have. The Belleville, you say?"

"The Belleville. If I can be of use—I mean, if I have a right to be of use——" He looked toward Evan, whom Petrovna was rocking to and fro in his arms.

"The boy," said the count, "is friendless and penniless. They will hang his father to a certainty, and they will hang a good fellow, for whom I have a sincere respect. They will lock up his mother for ten or twelve years at least. I would have taken him home with me, but I am a broken reed for any body to rest on. Poor old Petrovna and I can just hold body and soul together, and that is all. I am sorry for the child."

"Is this the boy," the marquess asked, "who was found with his mother in the act of attempting to bury the body of the murdered man?"

"That is the child," Montmeillard answered.

"Well," said the Englishman, after an undecided pause, "come and dine with me to-night, and we can talk it over. Perhaps you might let me do something for you also."

"For me?" cried the count, laughing once more. "I am happy with my pigs and my Petrovna."

When the two had parted, the count sat on the grass beside Petrovna and the boy, and opened out to him the prospect he thought he had secured.

"My little Evan," he said, "you saw the gentleman who has just gone away? He is one of the richest men in the world, and one of the kindest. He is a great lord in his own country,—in England,—and if I ask him he will take care of you."

"Who is he?" asked Petrovna.

"He is the Marquess of Avelchurch," Montmeillard answered. "We were at Oxford together."

"Will you go with him, my little Evan?" asked Petrovna, in a voice of silky mockery. His halting English lent an odd emphasis to his speech. "Will you go to him, my little Evan, and be a little servant, and learn to be proud to dirty little boys, and to turn up the nose at people because they are poor? Oh, you should go, for by and by the great nobleman will dress you in silk stockings, and will give you a laced coat like the monkey at the fair, and make you a fine gentleman indeed, and you will ride at the back of his carriage, and will learn to be a snob and a slave, my little Evan. Oh, what a chance, what an opportunity! Won't you go, my little Evan?"

Little Evan had been brought up in a rough school, and without his consent had listened to a good deal of rough language. Montmeillard laughed aloud when the boy clutched Petrovna with a new burst of indignant tears, and blubbered out:

"I'll see him go to hell first!"

CHAPTER VII

As a concession to circumstance the Comte de Montmeillard bought a paper collar and an inexpensive tie. He borrowed the blacking-brushes at the cheap little boarding-house in which for the time being he rested, and with his own aristocratic hands brushed his own boots, singing gayly meanwhile. At the appointed hour he presented himself at the Belleville with his shabby jacket buttoned over the Crimean shirt, and his hat cocked on three hairs, as smiling and jaunty as if he had had a million at the bank, and had trodden the asphalt of his native Paris on his way to that little supper chez Bignon for which he had a few hours earlier professed himself willing to sell his political conscience.

Mr. Johnstone's incognito was less successfully preserved than the Marquess of Avelchurch fancied, and when that gentleman ordered that some extra care should be taken with the day's dinner, the landlord of the Belleville construed the request after the most generous fashion. The astonished convives found before them a couple of fowls boiled, a couple of fowls roasted, a pair of roast ducks, a roast goose, and a huge wild turkey some thirty pounds in weight. Half a score of pies and puddings stood upon the sideboard, and every kind of vegetable the district could supply steamed in as many dishes. A marquess and the son of a duke, the landlord argued, might very well be more plenteously supplied than a commoner; at least, he had a right to a larger bill, and the house was plenteously provisioned for a day or two. The count's shabby exterior made no difference in his reception, for whom the Mar-

quess of Avelchurch cared to distinguish by his hospitality was of necessity a person of importance.

The marquess ate little, but the count, who had long been strange to good fare, devoted himself to the wild turkey with such vigor as to make a considerable inroad even upon that majestic bird. The host had found in his cellar a really excellent Australian hermitage, and for an hour the exile was happy. A cup of indifferent coffee crowned the banquet, and a cigar from the marquess's own case seemed to taste of heaven.

"Unhappy man!" said the count, lolling back in his chair, and looking idly at his companion through the smoke-wreaths. "You dine every day."

"Is that a matter of commiseration?" the other asked.

"Try my plan," said the count. "Refrain from dining for five years. Then dine."

"Why not go back to Paris?" asked the marquess.

"My dear fellow," returned Montmeillard, "since I must wear a shabby jacket, I would rather wear it anywhere in the world than in Paris. To be poor in Paris is the very devil. I have tried it, and I know. To be poor out here matters nothing at all. It is a great deal better fun than you would fancy."

"Well," said the marquess, after a pause, "about the boy. I have been making enquiries, and I find there is not the remotest probability of an acquittal in the case of either of his parents."

"There is not," Montmeillard answered, "the faintest little shadow of a chance."

"You spoke of the child as showing promise," said the marquess. "In what direction?"

"He's a bright little fellow altogether," the count answered; "a boy of whom I fancy you might make almost any thing."

"He has no friends or relatives in this country?"

"Not a soul."

"I see no reason," said the Marquess of Avelchurch, after a lengthier pause—"I see no reason why I should not help him. He might be sent to school, and then taught some useful trade. I think I could undertake that. One would have to find somebody to look after him, and it would be better for the boy to be removed from the region of this miserable tragedy. Yes, I think I may undertake that. I will have it seen to. Is the boy with you?"

"Petrovna has him in charge just now," the count answered.

"The sooner he is out of Mr. Petrovna's charge the better," said the marquess. "I will see that arrangements are made for him at once."

Now that he had secured the sympathy of so powerful a protector young Evan's prospects would have seemed to brighten, but there came an unexpected hitch in the arrangements for his benefit. Before the benevolent scheme of the marquess could be put into effect Evan Rhys the elder had been tried for the murder of Mr. Penthearn, had been found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. His wife had been convicted, as every-body had foreseen she would be, as an accessory after the fact, but in her case the judge was merciful, and inflicted a comparatively light sentence—one of five years' imprisonment.

Montmeillard's one purpose in visiting the city had been to witness the trial. Now that was over he would have returned at once but for young Evan. He waited to see the boy disposed of, but he waited in vain.

Evan seemed almost stupefied. He ate nothing for days, and the people about him began to be afraid for his life. Nothing short of force,—and nobody had the heart to apply that,—could keep the wretched child from rambling round the prison in which his father lay awaiting the

sentence of the law. He had to be sought there late at night, but he was back again with the first glimpse of dawn, and all day long he prowled about the prison or sat staring at its blank walls with a face as barren of expression as their own. On the fourth day after the delivery of the sentence Montmeillard found him seated on a heap of road metal at the back of the prison, bunched up like a diminutive old man, with his hands clasped about his knees.

"You must come home with me, Evan," said the count, stooping over him, and laying a kind hand upon his shoulder.

The boy lifted his face, striped and grimed with tears, and shook his head.

"You must really come," Montmeillard urged him. "There is a lady there who has travelled all the way from Melbourne on purpose to find you, and to take you away from here."

Young Evan shook his head again, very slowly and doggedly.

"The lady," said the count, "will take care of you and be kind to you. She will take you to school; you will be well dressed and well taken care of. You will be taught how to grow up to be a man, and you will have companions of your own age. You are going to school, Evan. Don't you think you will like that?"

A third time Evan shook his head. The count took one of the grimy little hands, and made a movement as if to lead him away. But the child resisted sullenly.

"Now, my poor little fellow," said Montmeillard, "what is the good of this? You are only making yourself very, very unhappy to no purpose. You will be better when you are away."

Persuasion was altogether wasted. The boy refused to speak a word, but sat staring at the prison wall, and only

shook his head from time to time when appealed to. Montmeillard had no mind to carry him away, or to drag him forcibly through the streets, and yet he did not care to be baffled. He left him, therefore, and went in search of a cab, a luxury he could ill afford. He found one in a few minutes, and returned with it, lifted the child bodily into the vehicle, and drove away with him. Evan struggled to free himself, but, finding that of no avail, sat still in silence.

They reached the boarding-house, and there Evan was introduced to the lady of whom the count had spoken. She was a kindly looking woman, dressed in fashionable mourning, and it is very likely that to the boy's fancy she was a member of one of those dreadful upper classes of whom he had heard so much. He refused to say a word to her, and had nothing but that dogged shake of the head in reply to all proposals.

"Very well, my poor little fellow," said the count at last. "It is of no use talking any more. Every-body means to be kind to you, and you will have to go."

"I sha'n't stop," said Evan, opening his lips for the first time.

"You will have to stop," said the count. "You will be made to stop."

"All right," the boy answered, with a short, contemptuous laugh.

The count gave vent to an exclamation in his own language, and the lady addressed him in halting and indifferent French.

This was really, she said, a most disagreeable and intractable child. He was not at all the kind of boy she had expected to find, or at all the kind of boy her husband was in the habit of receiving. She professed herself most anxious to oblige le marky, and it would be easy to make the child outwardly presentable, but she was very doubt-

ful as to the moral influence the young gentleman would exert in her husband's seminary.

"The Marquess of Avelchurch," asked the count, "has given instructions for the boy's outfit?"

Yes, said the lady, the marquess had given instructions that the child was to be respectably attired, and in all respects reasonably provided for. In that case the count suggested that it would be well to send at once to a tailor.

During this colloquy Evan sat silent, looking shrewdly from one to the other. The sound of a foreign language made him suspicious, and he felt that he was being disposed of in some clandestine fashion.

An outfit was found, and in the course of an hour or two Evan, having been bathed and scoured, was newly dressed from top to toe. He was quite passive under this change, but in another hour he had disappeared. He was sought for in the neighborhood of the prison, and again found there, and once more taken home.

"It's no good, Frenchy," he said; "I ain't goin' away. I shall stop where dad is till they've—till they've hanged him."

He had begun sulkily, but he ended in a new passion of tears. He vowed, storming, that he wouldn't, wouldn't, wouldn't go; that as often as they took him he would run away. He backed all this with an oath, which sounded so dreadful, coming from such childish lips, that the schoolmaster's wife lifted her hands in horror.

"Je voudraise obleegy le marky," said the lady, "mais le petty garçong est ampossib."

"Madam," said Montmeillard in his own tongue, "the boy has been roughly bred, but he is a child of an excellent disposition, and when this great grief is over, I have no doubt you will find him easy enough to deal with. I am afraid," he added, "that the shock of recent events has almost unhinged his mind."

The lady relented, and, "pour obleegy le marky," would do her best for this intractable waif. A generous outfit was packed for him, and a close watch was kept upon him to see that he did not again escape. The train for Melbourne started at an early hour next morning, and the count and Petrovna saw him off by it under the charge of his new protectress. This done, they turned their backs upon the city, and struck out across the wilds on a three-day's tramp to Koollala.

Young Evan bolted at the first station at which the train stopped, but was there at once arrested and brought back, struggling and fighting, in a savage silence. At the next station he made another attempt, but this time the feeble authority of the school-mistress was backed by the guard, who for a slight fee undertook the charge of the boy for the rest of the journey.

Once at the Spencer Street Station in Melbourne he was supposed to be safe, but he took advantage of a moment of confusion, lost himself in the crowd in a mere instant of time, and was away into the streets. He had not a penny about him, and the journey which he proposed to himself had taken eighteen hours by train. Had he been older the prospect of five hundred penniless miles might have dismayed him. As it was, he was far too young to be provident in his ideas, and the only definite thought in his mind was that every step he took would bring him nearer to his father. His first impulse was to run fast, in no matter what direction, so long as he could evade pursuit. But the minute he had made up his mind that he was not being followed he stopped to take breath, to look about him, and to resolve upon his course. He found himself in a by-street in which there were but few people going up and down. He allowed two or three to pass him, not finding any thing inviting or sympathetic in their looks. But by and by a broad-set, burly man, with a sun-tanned face and

hands, came along the street, and Evan ventured to stop him.

"I say, mate," he began, "which is the way to Adelaide?"

"Oh," said the man accosted, "you say 'mate,' do you?" He looked down laughingly at the diminutive figure. "Well, if you say mate, I say mate. What do you want to know the way to Adelaide for?"

"I want to go there," said Evan.

The stranger stared at him with rounded eyes. "Why, my lad," he answered, "you don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh, yes, I do," said Evan. "I want to go to Adelaide."

"Why, Adelaide's a matter of five hundred miles from here," the man responded, stooping, with a weather-stained hand on either knee, to get a closer look at this small curiosity.

"I want to go there," said Evan. "Which is the way?"

"You look," said the stranger, "as if you had some decent folks to take care of you. Where do you live?"

"I don't live anywhere," said Evan.

"H'm!" said the man, "that's a queerish sort of a yarn. Where do you come from?"

"I come from Adelaide," said Evan.

"Whereabouts in Adelaide?" the man asked, his red face growing redder as he stooped. "Come, now, no tricks with travellers—whereabouts in Adelaide?"

"I didn't live in Adelaide," said Evan. "I come from there yesterday by the train. I live in Koollala."

"Oh, at Koollala, did you?" the man said, straightening himself. "Why, that's the place where—— What did you say your name was?"

"Evan Rhys," said Evan.

The man gave quite a jump, and stared at him harder than ever. "What do you want to go to Adelaide for?" he asked.

"I want to go," said Evan. His features began to work, and his lips to tremble.

"Now, most likely," said the stranger, "you've been brought away from Adelaide for a reason, you have. You've bolted from the friends that brought you here. Eh, is that it?" The boy made no answer. "Now, what do you want to get back to Adelaide for?"

"Dad's there," Evan answered.

"You bet he is," said the stranger, in a low murmur to himself. "And whereabouts is dad in Adelaide?"

At this the boy broke down, and the strange man took him by the hand.

"You come along with me, my lad," he said, "and I'll see what I can do for you."

"No, no, no!" cried Evan. "I want to go to Adelaide."

"If you've got any right to go to Adelaide," the stranger answered, "I'll send you there. But if you haven't, you must go back to your friends. You come along with me."

Evan cried and struggled, but the stranger held him tightly, and he recognized the futility of resistance. In a very little while, however, they came upon a crowded thoroughfare, and, the man's grasp relaxing for a moment, the boy tore himself free and ran as if for life. The burly stranger pursued him for a few yards only, and then resigned the chase. Evan took another by-street, which led him toward the river, and there lounged about for hours, looking at the faces of the passers-by, and finding, after his recent experience, no encouragement in any one of them.

The way was full of difficulties he had not even dreamed of. He was only a child, though perhaps unusually precocious; and he felt himself quite foiled and helpless

as he walked about the inhospitable streets, not daring to accost a creature for fear that he should be once more arrested.

He began to grow hungry and a little footsore, for the boots with which he had been newly supplied cramped him. He longed to take them off, but found no barefooted people, and was afraid of looking singular. Neither pain nor hunger nor fatigue could dull the edge of his resolve. His determination to get back to Adelaide and be near his father was perhaps much less a resolve than a mere instinct; but, then, instinct is much stronger than mere resolve, and the bidding of his heart was altogether imperative, and not to be denied.

At last chance gave him what had been denied to enquiry. He found a group of men sitting by the waterside in Flinders Street smoking and talking. He had no interest in their conversation, but in a dazed sort of way he listened.

One of them said: "I am off out of this to-morrow. I shall hump my bluey early in the morning, and I shall make Geelong by nightfall."

"Back for Adelaide?" said another.

The man nodded.

"What do you want to go to a —— sleepy hole like that —— Adelaide for?" the other asked.

"I've got a pal there," the first speaker answered.

Young Evan took courage. Here was the first hint he had been able to discover as to the road on which he was bound to travel. He touched the speaker on the shoulder, and asked him: "How far is it to Geelong?"

"Why," said the man, staring at him rather curiously, "it's a matter of five-and-thirty mile, perhaps. What do you want to know for?"

"I want to go there," said Evan; "which is the way?"

"Geelong!" said the man, rubbing a bristly chin, and staring hard at him; "you will never make Geelong with them little legs of yours."

"Oh, yes, I shall," the boy answered confidently. "I want to go there, and I want to start at once. Which is the way?"

The man stood up and with a slow and heavy gesture directed him here and there into a tangle from which no intelligence could have escaped; but young Evan caught two points—the Warrabee and Chingford Station. They were on the way, and that was enough for him. He started on the road indicated, and from time to time made new enquiries. Now that he was able to ask for guidance to places which it did not seem quite impossible for him to reach, his questions were answered readily enough, though the people he accosted still showed some surprise at the spectacle of so very small a boy embarked alone upon so long a journey.

He drew clear of the city in a while, and pegged on steadily. When once he was free from observation, he took off his boots, and, tying the laces together, hung them over one shoulder. He rolled his socks into a ball, and stowed them away in his jacket pocket. In this fashion he walked more easily, for until within the last eight-and-forty hours he had no acquaintance with shoe-leather. He had not broken his fast that day. The weather was blazing hot, and he had already rambled miles about the city, which now lay behind him. Many a time he was fain to stop and rest, but the longing in his small yet valiant heart tugged him onward. Sometimes his hurry seemed so to draw him that he began to run, but it was not long before he found that this was likely to be the poorest way of making progress, and he set himself with a dogged tenacity, very remarkable in a child of his years, to a settled pace, and so went on mile after mile

along the lonely road, never once looking backward, and never once reckoning on the chances of success or the almost absolute certainty of failure. His father was five hundred miles ahead of him, sentenced to be hanged, and the craving to be near him was stronger than any physical impulse of fear or hunger or weariness.

CHAPTER VIII

But in any prolonged contest between soul and body, body has many hours of victory. It was still broad daylight, and there were still whole hours to walk in, when Evan came to a dead stand-still. When once he surrendered his forces, he slipped to the ground like a wet cloth, and for a while lay there almost without thought or feeling. In some five or six minutes he revived enough to take advantage of the partial shadow cast by a bush, and, having dragged himself into that shelter, began to harden his heart for a continuation of the journey. While he was in the very act of resolving that he would rise and make another start, he fell asleep.

The sun veered round, and shone full on his closed eyelids, but he made no movement. Since he had left the Spencer Street Station that morning he had travelled a matter of some twenty miles, and for as many hours he had not tasted food.

He lay until a heavy hand took him by the shoulder and shook him again and again. Then he sat up, staring about him, and seeing nothing but a blood-red glow and wavering shapes of darkness.

"Egad," said a rough voice, "I thought you was dead. What's the matter with you? What brings you here?"

Evan's sight began to clear a little, and he could make out dimly that a man with a swag across his shoulders was bending over him. He rubbed his eyes, and saw huge globules of light and dark and red, but when he looked up again, he could see the stranger pretty clearly. He was a common enough figure for Australia at that time, bronzed

and bearded, attired in moleskin trousers, great laced boots, a collarless flannel shirt, and a big wide-awake.

"I fell asleep," said Evan.

"Yes," said the man, "that's pretty evident. You fell asleep, and you fell asleep in the sun, and that's a dangerous thing to do in these 'ere latitudes. Where are you from?"

"Melbourne," said Evan.

"That's where I'm bound for. How far is it?"

Evan could not tell him. He thought it might be twenty miles, and at that response the stranger swore softly to himself and sat down.

"It can't be nigh on as far as that, youngster," he said. "By my reckoning it should be no more than twelve. And where are you going to?"

"Geelong," said Evan.

"And where do you put up by the way?"

"I don't know," the boy answered.

The man said "Jehoshaphat!" and regarded him with the look of curiosity and wonder to which he was now growing fast accustomed.

"There's a station five miles on," said the stranger, after a pause. "They'll give a whipper-snapper like you a shake-down there, I *should* fancy, though they're pretty hard on a grown-up sundowner. Got folks living at Geelong?" he asked, after another pause.

"No," said Evan.

"Where, then?" the man asked him.

"It's further on a goodish way," Evan responded. He was growing wary, and perhaps in his inmost heart he knew that the proposed walk to Adelaide was little short of madness. He was afraid of every-body. All sorts and conditions of people seemed disposed to exert authority over him.

"How long do you reckon to be on the road?" enquired the stranger.

"A day or two," the boy answered.

The man looked him up and down, shifted the swag from his shoulders to the ground, and began to fill a pipe.

"Got any tucker?" he asked.

"No."

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes."

The stranger unbuckled his swag, and set bread and meat before him, together with a tin bottle of cold unsugared tea.

"Take a swig at that," he said, "and then pitch in. You needn't spare," he added, with a nod. "I shall make Melbourne to-night, and you'll leave enough for me, any way."

He drew a huge clasp-knife from his pocket, opened it, and handed it to the boy, who fell on the provisions voraciously. While he ate, the stranger took between his huge sun-tanned thumb and finger the collar of Evan's jacket, and examined the material.

"That's pretty new. You've got folks to look after you, seemingly. What brings you all alone out here?"

It was a peculiarity of young Evan that he had not yet learned to lie, unless it were in direct negative or affirmative. He had no invention, and without telling the truth was quite unable to account for himself. He went on eating, therefore, and returned no answer.

The stranger questioned him no further, but when Evan's appetite was fully satisfied, he corked the tin bottle, carefully rolled up his provisions in his blanket, and rebuckled the straps which held it.

"You're no affair of mine," he said, after going through all this in silence, "but I'll be d——d if you ain't a curiosity!"

He rose, slung his burden to his broad shoulders, and

stood for a moment looking down at his chance-found companion.

"The station," he said, "is about five miles along. You'll make it in a couple of hours, and I should think they'd give you some sort of shake-down."

Evan rose to his feet, picked up his boots, and started on the road indicated by the man's outstretched hand.

"Halloa!" said the stranger, "is that your manners?"

"I'm much obliged to you, matey," said the boy; and so, without a backward look, he set out again upon his journey. The man stared after him, tilted his wide-awake to scratch his tousled head, and nodded a score of times. Then he also turned and went upon his way.

Evan's shadow lengthened before him, until at last he could see it bobbing up and down on bushes or chance projections of the ground a hundred yards ahead. Then it melted into the general shadow, and the sun was down. The boy had lived his life in the open air, and had been afoot every day from morning till night, but, hardy as he was, the day's work had been too much for him, and he could barely crawl. The great, waste, open country grew more and more desolate as the vast ring of yellow light faded rapidly from the sky. Then darkness came on, and for a while he could hardly see the track, but after a few minutes the stars began to light up, and by and by diffused a soft radiance full and clear enough to light his footsteps. He reached the station of which the stranger had spoken, but there was a great barking of savage dogs there, and he was afraid to go near the place.

A town-bred child would have thought the night full of terror and misery, but Evan was hardened to solitude. He found a soft enough bed in the furrow of a field of lucern grass, and slept soundly until the dawn. In the clear, pale light all the wide expanse of country looked awfully solemn and lonely. The curtained windows of the

big station-house were like closed eyes. The dogs were quiet now, and the only sound to be heard was that made by a horse in the stables at the back of the house, who rasped a restless chain through an iron ring attached to his manger, and beat from time to time an iron-shod hoof on a brick floor.

The sun was barely up when a soft, melodious voice, exquisitively plaintive, called out: "Neil Gow! Neil Gow! Neil Gow!" three times, as if the speaker's heart were broken by the night-long absence of some person of that name. This woke the cynic of the neighboring wood, the laughing jackass, deriding the grave melodist of the morn with peals of scornful merriment. Down came his native enemy, the shrike, with a cry as piercing as his beak, and a fight ensued—all anger on the one side, and all cynic laughter on the other. The shrill note of the crane sounded solitary far and far away.

Evan emerged from the field in which he had slept, and sat down upon a rail to await the awakening of the household. He felt no humiliation at the thought of begging his bread. He was bound to be near the father whom he must lose so soon, and he must needs hold body and soul together. The sun was but just over the horizon when he heard a faint sound of movement in the house, and by and by a door opened, and a Chinaman came out and began to water a kitchen-garden. He looked at Evan from time to time as he went about his business with a face which had no more expression in it than might be found in a cannon-ball, but he made no enquiries, though even to a Chinaman the presence of a strange small boy at such an hour at such a place might have seemed a little curious. In a quarter of an hour or so there was a rather boisterous sound of voices in the rear of the house, and Evan knew that the boundary riders were grooming their horses in preparation for the day's work. The dogs were out again by this

time—three or four of them—monstrous creatures, throttling themselves in their collars, and yelping madly to be among the bustle of the morning. He was not afraid of them now, but he gave them a wide berth, for all that, as he made his way round the house, and toward the stables.

"What you wantee here?" asked John Chinaman, seeing him on the move.

"I want some tucker," said Evan boldly, and John grinned in friendly fashion.

"All litee, you go backsidee—you get plog there."

A brawny, red-armed woman in the kitchen heard young Evan's plea for refreshment, and handed him a huge draught of buttermilk, half a loaf, and a dish of boiled mutton.

"Where are you going to?" she asked.

"Geelong," said Evan, with his mouth full.

"You won't get there afore nightfall."

She hacked a generous chunk from the loaf, and another from the boiled mutton. "You'll want that on the way." The boy ate his fill, and the woman, having found a piece of old clean toweling, wrapped up the bread and meat in it, and handed it to him with a kiss. He was not greatly used to demonstrations of affection, and his heart was tender. He had cried so much of late that the tears were near his eyes. He blinked away the water from his lashes, and gave one sniff of pathos. "You're young to be travelling about by yourself," said the woman. She knelt down by him in womanly fashion, with one hand upon his shoulder, but just then a voice from inside the house called her. She rose hastily to obey the summons, and Evan, being thus left alone, slipped with a face of shame out of the house, and took the road again.

He walked on all day long, and all day long he saw the blank walls of the prison in which his father lay, and his heart yearned to be before them, as if there lay there a

very haven of peace and rest. The outside of the jail in which his father sat under sentence to be hanged made but a poor ideal of home for a child, and yet it was the only one he had. Within that bleak and forbidding building was all he cared for, or, as it seemed to him then through the limited vision of childhood, all he would ever care for. The place drew him as a candle draws a moth, and he walked on toward it mile after mile, and hour after hour, the sun flaming down pitilessly, and the rough road scorching his bare feet. He reached the town at nightfall, but somehow it looked less hospitable and friendly than the wilderness, and, tired as he was, he dragged himself beyond it, made his last meal in the darkness, and lay down to sleep within sound of the calling of the sea. The woman at the station had helped him so plenteously that he reckoned himself provisioned for the morrow, but when he woke in the morning, he found the meat quite rancid, and even the plentiful hunch of bread was so tainted by contact with it that his gorge rose at every morsel. There were a thousand things to interest him on his journey had he been less preoccupied, for the lad had an eye for nature, and, having spent all his life in field and woodland, knew more about her open-air secrets than eighty grown men out of a hundred. He passed things which would have been the delight and wonder of a summer day without a sign of observation, for he saw more clearly than any thing before his bodily eyes the bleak walls of the jail.

But let the heart's passion be never so overwhelming, there is only so much work to be got out of any bodily mechanism. His feet began to gall him, until the hot, rough road burned like smouldering cinders under them. He grew hungry again, and, what was infinitely worse, began to know (for the first time in his life) what thirst could mean. He went on weeping and whimpering, dogged as ever, lifting one flinching foot after the other, and lick-

ing with his baked lips at the tears which, in spite of resolution, trickled down his face. The little heart throbbed with scorn and indignation at his bodily weakness, and he stuck to his task until he could absolutely go no further. He had had in view for the last mile or so a dark belt of bush, toward which the road led straight, and he had panted for the cool and shade of this, and had promised himself that when he reached it he would find refreshment and new strength. He had barely struck the bush track when he dropped on his hands and knees, weeping aloud for pain and something very like despair and rage at his own weakness. The welcome of those desolate walls, which had so far drawn him on, seemed to recede from him, and to go further and further away into an impossible distance. It was a pitiable thing that a child should have such a goal at all, but to be balked of *that* seemed intolerable, and, being a good deal dazzled by the sun, and addled in mind by the light and heat, and by pain and mental misery, he grew conscious of something within himself which pitied him so profoundly that the sense of his own suffering and of his better deservings broke him down altogether. He thought himself miles away from any chance of refuge.

He tried again and again to defy his own weakness, but his flinching feet refused to bear him, and at last he found almost a luxury in the comforts of despair. He had tried his best, and the thing was not to be done. If nobody passed, or if such as passed were hard-hearted and refused to succor him, he would die. There was no help for it.

He lay amid the undergrowth, on the edge of the track, and pillowed his wet face on both hands. He would die because he had tried to go where his heart called him, and there was an extraordinary sweetness in the thought which surged above all bitterness and pain. There are fountains of sweet water even in the waste brine of great oceans. In fancy he lay beside his father on his prison bed. He

could almost feel with his cheek the rough corduroy of his father's coat and its bone buttons. His father's arms were around him. He was sure and more sure of that, and his aches and pains were all fading away, when a distant footstep came into his dream, and, without disturbing him, drew nearer and heavier, until the sudden pause aroused him, and a rough voice cried out: "Halloa!" in a tone of astonishment. He turned his head, and there before him was the man who in Flinders Street, two days before, had expressed his intention to walk to Adelaide. The boy's first thought was like a gleam of joy to him, for one of his late torments had arisen from an uncertainty about the road. He knew now that he was on the right track, and the reflection gave him no time to consider that he had fallen helpless upon it, with barely a twentieth part of his attempted journey done!

"Halloa!" said the man again, and stood staring at him, pipe in cheek, with great beads of perspiration gathered on his sandy eyebrows. "You've overshot Geelong, my lad, by fifteen miles. Do you know that?"

"Yes," said Evan, "I am going to Adelaide."

"With them feet?" asked the tramp.

The boy's bare soles, flayed and bleeding, with little fragments of gravel sticking into them here and there, were fully exposed to view. Evan sat up painfully, and with difficulty dragged a foot upon one knee, and inspected it gingerly, brushing away the harsh morsels which had forced their way through the toughened skin.

"This is all —— nonsense," said the man, who was a stupid, rough fellow to look at. "You can't be let lie here and die. Of all the —— luck I ever met in all my life this is the ——est. It ain't enough as I've done fifteen miles a'ready after five-and-thirty yesterday in this br'iling heat, but I've got to take you up pick-a-back for the next fifteen. Oh, blarst the world, I say! Come along! You've got

to be fixed up somehow. I'm d——d if your lips ain't cracking. Thirsty? Take a pull at that."

He had a tin bottle of tea, tepid with the sun's heat, slung across his shoulders, and hanging down in front of his bare, hairy chest. He unslung it, drew out the cork, and proffered it to Evan, who began to drink greedily.

"Not that way," said the tramp; "that's waste, that is." He laid a restraining hand upon the bottle. "Don't do you no good neither. A teaspoonful at a time, and roll about your mouth well afore you swallows it. That's the way. Does you ten times the good on half the quantity. Feel better?"

"I'm all right now," said Evan, trying to rise.

"Oh, yes," the tramp retorted, "you're all right, you are, I don't think. You was all right to lie and rot here if somebody hadn't had the d——d bad luck to come by and spot you."

Staring sulkily at Evan, and mumbling ferocious curses all the while, he slowly swung round his swag from his shoulders, until it reposed upon his chest. Then, still cursing at the hardness of his lot, he knelt, and made a back.

"Get up, you young imp," he said, "and don't you start on no more walks to Adelaide when I'm on the Wallaby."

He shambled from his knees to his feet, and, having shaken the boy into comfortable posture, started off, growling to himself to the effect that he was the unluckiest devil ever born, and that life for him was one continuous and increasing burden. He did his service ungraciously, but within the next six hours he carried a well-grown lad of eight years fifteen miles, and finally, with many execrations, deposited him at a roadside shanty, the occupant of which was willing to offer shelter to the pair.

Evan lay footsore for two days, and then a passing teamster gave him a lift to Ballarat. Here he learned that

something like a fifth part of his journey had been accomplished, though he had spent eight days upon it, despite the help he had received. The rest had restored him, and he was off once more with the break of morning light, filled with all the old doggedness of resolve. When all was said and done, he had prospered so far, and a faith began to awaken in him that he would finish his journey.

It is very doubtful if at any period of his after life he could have told the story of that journey in any thing like completeness. He traversed great tracts of open wilderness, and threaded his way through huge forests. He met with constant help and kindness, and, though he was often hungry and athirst, life was kept in him somehow. The moon had been at the beginning of her last quarter when he had started on his journey, but at one portion of it night after night he walked under her beautiful lamp, having learned to appreciate the advantage of sleeping through the heat of the day. Night after night, when there was no other human creature within miles, the little figure toiled along with that one mild, unwinking eye upon him, the more distant glory of the stars all drowned in its effulgence, and the landscape rolling around him wide and bare as far as eye could reach. Then when the moon's fickle time of rising changed, he went on in the sweltering heat again.

Every-body he met was kind, and he had help in plenty; but people, when they questioned him, and learned on what a journey he had embarked, looked at him with a kind of wonder. Once when he was within a hundred miles of Adelaide, and said that he had walked from Melbourne, he was roundly denounced as a liar, and was just on the point of having his ears cuffed, when the arrival of a stranger on horseback caused a diversion, and he escaped an undeserved chastisement. The mounted man had heard of him all along the road, and asked, at the first sight of

him, if that was the little chap who had started out to walk to Adelaide. On this the people who had disbelieved made him an instant pet, and the horseman, riding on next morning, told his story in advance, so that people looked out for him, and the last five days of his journey were made easy by many casts in country carts, and by a free-handed hospitality which allowed him to want for nothing. He was questioned again and again, but he never revealed his name or his real purpose. His father was in Adelaide, and he was going to him ; that was all his story. He was not a lovable little boy to look at, with his snub nose and his freckles ; and long before this time the respectable clothes in which he had started were soiled and torn ; but the amazing courage and constancy which stood in such contrast to his tender years found him favor everywhere. A friendly teamster gave him a final lift into the long-sought city.

This last cast of the journey was taken by night, and the boy was set down in the pale dawn within half a mile of the jail. He made all haste to the dismal Mecca of his pilgrimage, found the pile of stones he had been accustomed to sit on weeks ago, and resumed his old place.

The day broadened, loiterers came, one by one, and two by two, and hung about the place. At length quite a crowd had gathered, but Evan, dulled by want of sleep, noticed little. He had occupied his place for hours, unregarded by any body, when a deep "Ah !" rose from the scattered crowd, and, looking up, he saw a black flag floating over the prison wall. Something knocked within his breast, he knew not what.

"That's an end of *him*," said some man standing near him.

"An end of who ?" asked Evan.

"By God !" said the man addressed, "that's Evan Rhys's kid—catch him, somebody !"

CHAPTER IX

The Comte de Montmeillard was splitting rails with the view to the erection of a new hogpen when a mounted man rode into Koollala with a letter addressed to the exile by his full style and title. The count was in his shirt-sleeves, and was merrily swinging the heavy mallet which drove home the wedge when the horseman rode up and accosted him.

"This place Koollala?"

"This is Koollala," said the count, pausing in his labor, and looking up with his never-failing smile.

"I'm told that there's a French count hereabouts," said the man—"the Comte de Mont something or other."

"I am he," returned the count; "do you wish to see me? The Comte de Montmeillard, at your service."

The man handed him the letter. He broke the seal, and read the contents with a growing look of amazement. Then, to the astonishment of the horseman, he began to sing in his own tongue, and to dance and caper with extravagant gestures. For the moment the messenger was half inclined to think him mad.

"Petrovna," the count shouted, "come here!"

Petrovna emerged from the shanty, his hands covered with dough. He had been engaged in the making of a damper for the evening meal.

"What is it?" he asked eagerly.

"I have news," said the count, "the most glorious, the most unexpected, the most magnificent. Behold in me the head of our so famous and historic house. My uncle is dead."

"Family affection," said Petrovna grimly, "it is a beautiful thing!"

"So I have heard," the count responded. "There is nothing which so exalts human nature as the existence of the family tie. For instance, the present case. I, hitherto known as Frenchy, Matey, Ned, am exalted, because of that same tie, into the style and title of Duc de Marais Castel, with a revenue of Heaven alone knows how many hundreds of thousands of francs per annum. Rejoice with me, my Petrovna. We will go to Paris together, and we will start a propaganda. I will pay for the powder to blow up your Czar, and, ohé, oho, I will dine once more chez Bignon. Think of it, my friend: I shall have once more under my feet the asphalt of Paris. I shall flane, flane, flane! The pretty Juliette has forgotten me by this time, but there is more than one pretty Juliette in Paris. Paris, my good friend,—no disrespect to St. Petersburg intended,—is the centre of the universe, and thither all good things, all things charming and of good repute, perpetually flow. Thither flow I, late Frenchy, Duc de Marais Castel. Congratulate me, my Petrovna."

"You are sure of the amnesty?" Petrovna asked.

"My good, sweet sir," the count responded, "are we not now in the days of the Republic, and is it that I who was a declared enemy of the Empire shall be received with any thing but welcome? Perish the thought!"

He was in reality half wild with this unexpected and unlooked-for news, and for the first two or three minutes of his delirium the beautiful precision of his English left him altogether. He spoke in English because he knew that the deliverer of the missive would understand no word of French, and for the moment he was proud enough of his new-found wealth and importance to desire even so humble a person to be aware of his consequence. This was a little curious, and yet quite natural. He had borne

his misfortunes like a hero and a man of the world, but he took good-luck with the effervescence and braggadocio of a school-boy.

"But you, my Petrovna," he said, "seem in no way exalted by this majestic intelligence."

"Why should I be exalted?" Petrovna asked. "A good man will be spoiled. A friend of the people will become again an aristocrat."

"My good Petrovna," said the count, "a man who is lucky enough to get it may smoke a good cigar, may drink a glass of good Burgundy, may eat a good dinner, and may even kiss a pretty girl, and yet not cease to love his brethren. We march, my Petrovna, we march to-day. Give me your name, my friend," he added, turning to the horseman. "Unhappily, at this moment my pockets are empty, but if you care for pigs, there are a score of them at your service. Here is a freehold tenement, elegantly situated, and fashionably furnished, with which I present you. This estate, sir, is your property. You will sell it if you can. You may reside upon it if you will. It is at your disposal from this moment."

The man sat in his saddle, looking down upon the count with an uneasy, half-bashful grin.

"D'ye mean that, governor?" he asked.

"I mean it," the count returned, with a burlesque flourish; "upon my word and honor, I will make it over to you by legal document at any moment. I have no further use for it. Wait until I write you a letter."

He entered the shanty, found there a sheet of paper and the stump of an old pencil, and in high excitement wrote a dozen lines addressed to the solicitor in Adelaide from whom he had received his splendid news. In this note he requested that a conveyance should be sent to meet him, stated his intention of starting at once on foot, and expressed his desire that whatever property he left behind

him in Koollala should be legally made over to the bearer of the missive.

Away galloped the horseman, and the gay youngster dashed into the house again, flung together a few trifles,—brush, comb, tooth-brush, soap, and towel,—and, tying all these up together, proclaimed himself ready to leave.

"Come along, my Petrovna. We start to-day for Paris, the centre of the universe!"

"And what," asked Petrovna, with unusual solemnity, "shall we do when we get there?"

"We shall eat and drink and be merry," cried the count, "and we shall spread the propaganda. We will have pleasant days, my friend, in Paris."

Petrovna went about his preparations slowly, and with an air of great unwillingness.

"You will change," he said. "I foresee it; you will change."

"Change?" cried the count. "Not I!"

He grew serious on a sudden, and laid both hands on his companion's shoulders.

"Look you here, my good Petrovna. Listen to me. I have been now all these years an exile, and you must not think because I am bright and gay sometimes that there is no bitterness in my heart. You must not think that because I have lived with the poorest I have ceased to think of the poor. You must not think I shall forget the faith we have talked of so often. No, no, you shall not think these things, Petrovna." He released Petrovna's shoulders, and held out both hands to him impetuously. Petrovna took them with a yearning smile, shook them once up and down, and turned away.

"Now," cried the count, "let us march! The world is all before us where to choose, and I choose Paris. En avant!"

They left the door standing wide open. They walked out together.

"But, oho!" cried the count, before they had travelled a score of yards, "who is to take care of my faithful porkers? They will die of thirst if they are not seen to."

He turned, and, running, shouted to a neighbor, who, at a distance of a hundred yards, was at work in his own garden. The man lifted up his voice in answer, and undertook during the count's absence to take charge of his belongings. Then, with no farewell spoken, the Comte de Montmeillard turned his back upon Koollala, and set his face toward the goal of his desires.

Petrovna walked with a subdued air, his massive forehead wrinkled, and his eyes cast down upon the ground. His companion went with something of a dance in his gait, snapping his fingers, and breaking into short bursts of song. At the end of the first mile or thereabouts he also became silent and thoughtful, and when they had tramped another mile without speaking, he laid a hand upon Petrovna's arm.

"I have been thinking," he said.

"I knew it," returned the Russian, casting a gloomy and regretful look upon him.

"I have been thinking," said the count, with a touch of irritation and impatience in his tone, "that we might be of service to the world at large in perhaps a more good-humored way than we have fancied."

"Yes," said Petrovna, "that is certainly possible. If I were still at your age, and if I had your news, I should think so. I told you you would change, but I did not think you would justify my prophecy so early."

"My dear fellow," returned the count, in irritated expostulation, "I have done something for my political ideas. I have suffered something for them. I am not

yet an old man, and I don't see why I should not enjoy such part of my youth as is left to me since the chance of enjoyment once more presents itself. But you, man of blood and iron that you are, you shall have the sinews of war. You shall preach and labor as much as you will."

"Well, well," said Petrovna, "we shall see."

They were both uneasy, and from this time forward they marched on side by side in silence, until they emerged from the bush, and came in sight of the Penthearn Station. There, far away, half across the big paddock, a little figure painfully crawled toward them, and Petrovna, lifting up his eyes at the end of a prolonged revery, observed it with astonishment.

"Look yonder!" he cried; "your eyes are younger than mine, but surely I am not mistaken."

The count's glance followed the direction of Petrovna's extended hand, and he also exclaimed, and started.

"What brings that unfortunate young imp back here again?" he asked.

"Heaven knows," returned Petrovna, "but I was not mistaken."

They increased their pace, and in a very little while were assured of their conjecture. The tattered and woe-begone figure of Evan Rhys drew near. The boy walked painfully, limping and halting, and when at last the travellers met, it was seen that under the tan of his thickly freckled skin he was pale. There was a deep fringe of color round his sunken eyes, and his lips were of an unwholesome bluish tint. The count laid a hand upon him, or he would have gone by.

"What brings you here?" he asked. "How did you get back from Melbourne?"

"Walked," said young Evan.

"Walked!" the count echoed in astonishment. "But why—what for?"

"I wasn't going to leave dad," the boy answered, "not while he was there. I told 'em so."

The count knelt down upon the grass, and took young Evan gently by the elbows.

"Where are you going now?"

"To Koollala," Evan responded curtly.

"But, my poor little fellow," said the count, "there is nobody now at Koollala who cares for you, or who can keep you. Que faut il faire, Petrovna?"

Petrovna shook his head in answer to the enquiry, and spread his hands abroad, as if he resigned the problem.

"Wednesday," said the count, speaking in French, "was the day appointed for the execution. The child is left absolutely alone in the world. He is a brave little fellow, and an affectionate little fellow. I cannot leave him here to starve. It's against human nature. Why did you run away, my silly little fellow?" he continued in English, turning to the boy as he spoke, and putting one arm about his shoulders. "You would have been happy and well-to-do. I had found a rich friend for you. You would have gone to school, and learned many useful things, and would have grown up to be useful and respectable."

"They took me away from dad," said the boy, with a sort of dull defiance in his tone. "I wouldn't stand it. You wouldn't ha' stood it. Nobody would ha' stood it."

"At least," said the count, "it is of no use to go to Koollala, my little Evan. You will come with me, will you not? You and I have always been the best of friends, and there is now nobody left to look after you. You will come with me."

"Yes," said Evan, thrusting his dirty little paw into the count's extended hand. His throat and lips worked, and his eyes twinkled, but he gave no other sign of emotion. Montmeillard rose to his feet, still holding the dirty paw for an instant. The sun-burned landscape winked

before him, and was seen all awry through a mist of thin trees. Young Evan followed the example of his companions, and set his back against Koollala forever.

The first day's journey was toilsome, and was accomplished with some difficulty. Next day the buggy the count had sent for met them, and they went on at ease. That evening landed them in the South Australian capital. There Montmeillard encountered the solicitor who had sent him the news of his accession to the fortune, and, at once obtaining an advance of money, he betook himself to an outfitter, by whose aid for the first time for eight years he was habited once more like a gentleman. Petrovna and young Evan were also provided for, and the trio went to an hotel, where the Duc de Marais Castel and his companions were received with a welcome which would scarcely have been extended to the three forlorn-looking wanderers who had entered the city only an hour or two before.

The novel splendors of his surroundings abashed the boy, and made him feel dreadfully uncomfortable. He had been bred very much like a young savage, and the glass and silver and snowy napery of the first civilized table at which he had ever sat filled him with astonishment. He rebelled at these things, and thought that he had never been so ill at ease in his life. He was more than half afraid to sleep in the bed provided for him, though by and by, being alone, he learned to appreciate that luxury. Petrovna, Nihilist and Communist as he was, had no rooted objection for once to a good dinner, a glass of sound wine, and a reasonable cigar ; and after dinner, when Evan had been sent to bed, the Russian and his newly wealthy companion sat on the veranda of the hotel in the cool of the evening, and under the quiet stars discussed young Evan's future.

"It would be best," said Petrovna, "to put him to school here. You can easily provide for him now."

"No," the other declared, with some heat, "he shall not stay in these colonies, where his father has been hanged for murder, and his mother lies in penal servitude. These things are not the fault of the child ; but the record is not a pretty one. I will take him away, and provide for him in England. I am sorry," he said, reaching out his hand toward a tumbler of iced brandy and soda—"I am sorry in my heart for the little beggar. Ohé, my Petrovna, it is a happy thing to have a little money, and be able to do a little good with it."

"Do you remember," asked Petrovna, "a certain injunction which was laid upon a young man who had great riches? Give all that thou hast to the poor, and follow me."

"I remember," Montmeillard answered, "that the young man went away sorrowful. For my own part, I see no reason to go away sorrowful. I'm going away to be as happy as I can. I can do my little bit of good in my own way, and you, my dear fellow, shall do yours as you please. If you blow up your Czar, I shall neither rejoice nor grieve, but there will be another Czar to-morrow, and if you blow him up, there will be another the day after."

Petrovna shrugged his shoulders, and was silent. The young Frenchman and he had had many talks together, and hitherto Montmeillard had been the reddest of red revolutionists. He had grown to be an indifferentist already, and once back in Paris it was easy to see that he would become at heart an aristocrat.

M. le Duc de Marais Castel could not for the life of him help being a personage. He would, as a matter of fact, have given a good deal to be left alone, but consideration was thrust upon him, and he had no chance to escape from it. Deputations of curious and congratulatory citizens waited upon him at his hotel. Interviewers from newspapers without number called to make enquiry into his

family history and the political romance of his own career. The newspapers were full of him. He was respectfully mobbed in the streets, and his departure from the city was made the occasion for a general demonstration. All this had a rather damaging effect upon his temper, for in the course of his years of exile he had lost something of that fine sense of *savoir faire* which had once belonged to him, and he was no longer as much at home when beleaguered by a crowd as he had been. He was plentifully supplied with money, and, with the easy generosity of extravagance which had always been natural to him, he had engaged saloon berths, not only for himself and his body-servant, but for Petrovna and young Evan. Petrovna chose to be sullen about this matter.

"I am of the people, and I do not separate myself from the people, or give myself airs above the people. What is good enough for the poorest of my brethren is good enough for me."

The temper of M. le Duc was that morning a little short, and when Petrovna declared, with perhaps more than necessary emphasis, that, if he travelled at all, he would travel by the steerage, he was told with sudden acerbity that he might go to the devil. Petrovna did not avail himself of the permission thus given, but he went to the shipping office, and with some difficulty succeeded in persuading the authorities there to exchange the two first-class berths which had been taken for Evan and himself for room in the steerage. The generous patron thought he had a right to be aggrieved at this, and showed it in his manner.

It seemed as if fate had it in charge to make the very name of gentleman odious to young Evan. That most charming, amiable, and sympathetic of friends who had once been simply known to him as Frenchy was now a person of consideration, and was instantaneously changed

in character and manner. It was not the boy's fault that he thought this, for, like other children, he took his mental color from his elders, and Petrovna grumbled incessantly.

"It is the same," he said, "everywhere and always. While he himself was one of the people, he had a heart for the people, and now he is changed. He is once again an aristocrat."

"What's an aristocrat?" asked young Evan.

"An aristocrat, my little friend," responded Petrovna, "is one of those who cause all the sufferings of the poor. They do nothing, and they claim every thing. You must bow to them. You must worship them. You must stand with your hat in your hand before them. You must live in sweat and misery that they may be happy and idle."

The boy mused over all this for a long time.

"I liked 'Frenchy,'" he said at last. "He wasn't half a bad sort."

"No," returned Petrovna, "there are many of them whose hearts are in the right place, but they are spoiled by their titles and their money."

The maligned Frenchman was not at hand to justify himself. He sailed in the same ship; and sometimes from their lower quarters the steerage passengers caught sight of him on the upper deck in company with gayly dressed ladies or in converse with the captain. The child's mind was already attuned to a sullen chord. His father's last words had taught him that the rich were execrable. He was an orphan because the rich were tyrannous and wicked, and everywhere he found the same lesson repeated. It was a man who, like the new-translated Frenchy, was rich and titled who had torn him from all that was left after his father's condemnation, and who had caused him that month of agony in which he had struggled back to Adelaide. A child knows little how to reason, but at least he can feel; and Evan felt that these rich were

altogether hateful and abominable. When he came to be a man, he would do something. He would punish some of them. They should not always sit in high places, and be happy and idle, while common people suffered. It is hard to translate the thoughts of a child, but, vague as his reflections were, and little as he could himself have expressed them, they were inspired by a genuine passion. Petrovna told him stories of his own sufferings in Siberia, and of the wretchedness of his fellow-exiles. They, of course, were all saints and angels, and it was the immeasurably wicked Czar who was responsible for all they endured. The Czar was Petrovna's red rag, and at the merest flutter of his name his mind lost its balance, and was filled with hate and fury. At many of the stories he heard in the course of the seven-weeks' journey young Evan cried.

"In my country," Petrovna told him, "there are hundreds, there are thousands, of little boys as small and as young as you are, and they are all alone in the world, and helpless, because the Czar has stolen away their fathers and mothers, and has given them to misery."

The little listener wept his own misfortunes in bewailing theirs, and was roused to a sudden fit of rage.

"If I was you," he said, with his white milk teeth clenched, and his small fists in the air—"if I was you, and lived in your country, I should kill that Czar. I'd buy a knife and kill him. They might do what they liked to me after, but I'd kill him."

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," said Boris Petrovna to himself, with a quiet solemnity of approval; and with that curious reflection he went on deck to smoke a last pipe before turning in.

CHAPTER X

When a man is fixed and obstinate in his determination to have a grievance, it is not easy to prevent him from taking his own way. Boris Petrovna had formed such a resolve, and in the solitude of the homeward voyage he found ample opportunity for the irritation of his own self-created sore. The genial and generous comrade of the past half year, the man who had succored him at his need, and had shared his own very limited resources with him ever since, was obscured to Petrovna's view altogether by the figure of the new-made Duc de Marais Castel. It was not that the man was natively selfish, ungenerous, or ungrateful. For his own satisfaction he was able to put the noblest complexion on the change which had taken place within him. He was a democrat of the democrats, and to him all titles which marked differences between men were hateful. The possession of riches, howsoever acquired, was the vilest of crimes against the body politic. There are a good many thousands of people nowadays who have learned to share these opinions, but there are not many who hold them, or, to speak more wisely, whom they hold, with such intensity as was manifested in Petrovna's case. Petrovna's ideal of a social landscape was a plain as level as a billiard-table. He would not have had its sacred monotony disturbed by so much as a hillock, and that a mountain should presume to be a mountain in defiance of his logical theories was like a blasphemy. The Duc de Marais Castel was a mere bubble, an airy something blown out by chance. Yet even him he could not tolerate. The title was a stench in his nostrils. The con-

templation of his wealth grew to be odious. The friend of a month ago was now worthy of all hatred, and was in all possible ways to be pricked and stung and girded at, and made to feel the monstrous wickedness and falsity of his own position. What made matters all the worse for the righteously indignant Petrovna was that the steerage had no access to the first saloon, and that for some weeks of the voyage the first saloon in the person of the new-fledged nobleman paid no visit to the steerage. Petrovna used to dilate to little Evan, who was his only companion, on the wickedness of rank and wealth, and the two sometimes would see the figure of the duke on the upper deck, where he stood smoking a cigar with the captain, or engaged in bright badinage and laughter with a group of gayly dressed ladies. The little fellow had been very fond of Frenchy from his first acquaintance with him. He had always found him kind and sweet-tempered, and these were characteristics which had not cropped up everywhere in his limited experience. But now it seemed that there was a gulf between them, and it was clear as daylight that the gulf was made by the wicked title and the still wickeder money. All the lessons of his own life pointed in the same direction. For his own part, the duke called to mind as often as might have been expected those two *protégés* who had wilfully withdrawn themselves from his society. He had been a little sore at first at Petrovna's behavior, but in his own careless fashion he had whistled away the grievance. For the first time for eight years he found himself once again in fairly civilized society. The people with whom he travelled were commonplace, *bourgeois* folk enough, but they were all respectable and well-to-do, and if in his own sense they were not exactly ladies and gentlemen, they had at least the surface manner of people who were accustomed to move in good society, and he found that an acceptable change from the manners and customs

of the convict settlement of New Caledonia, or the scarcely less penal existence of Koollala. He was going back to his regretted Paris, returning thither for the enjoyment of heaps of money and an old and honored title. He had in his hot youth been a revolutionary, partly because he had been bred in ideas profoundly aristocratic, and therefore hated the gimcrack glories of the second empire, partly because he honestly thought the third Napoleon a usurper and a scoundrel, but mainly because he was poor and discontented. Now, being suddenly and unexpectedly rich beyond any dream he had ever dared to dream, he began to feel mightily more contented with the world. A spirit naturally vivacious, and disposed to clothe things in bright colors on the slightest provocation, spread the immediate future with such roseate hues that it would have seemed a crime to darken them by any cloud of politics. He had had enough of active politics, so he began to think, to last him his lifetime. The analysis is the shallowest and the most commonplace in the world. He had been without the good things of this life, and had thus been discontented ; he came in for more than his full share of those good things, and his discontent vanished like a morning mist. He began to think well of those inequalities in life which had once seemed so monstrous and unbearable—that is to say, a change took place in him which, the conditions being granted, would take place in nine hundred and ninety-nine men in a thousand. He had got over his soreness at Petrovna's desertion, and on one fine day in the tropics he made up his mind to pay a visit to his *protégés*. He induced an officer of the ship to accompany him, and made his way to the steerage. There he found Petrovna and Evan seated over a draught-board.

They were both absorbed in the game, and the Russian was instructing the boy in some detail of its principles, when his old companion's hand descended genially upon his shoulder.

"Well, mon brave, how goes it?"

Petrovna looked up at the sound of the once familiar voice, and rose, cap in hand, with a mock humility.

"It is very gracious in the Duc de Marais Castel to remember his humble friends."

The Duc de Marais Castel felt the sneer implied, but, not being disposed to be suddenly resentful, he pretended not to notice it, and turned to Evan. The boy edged away from him, and the ship lurching a little at that moment upset the camp-stool he had been sitting on, so that he tumbled harmlessly to the deck. His patron helped him to his feet, but Evan recoiled again with every sign of stiffness and aversion.

"What is this?" the duke asked, looking from one to the other, and speaking in his own language. "Is it my fault that we have not been companions all along?"

"If I had guessed," said Petrovna, "that your Excellency would so emphatically have remembered your Excellency's place and mine, I would have stayed behind, or would have found some other way to Europe."

"Ohé!" said the duke, "I was not aware that you Russians counted ingratitude among the virtues."

"Your Excellency and I," said Petrovna, "are—no fit companions."

"That shall be as it may," the other retorted. "I had thought you were a better fellow, Petrovna. The change in my circumstances has not altered me, and I had hoped that it would not have altered you."

"Bah!" said Petrovna gruffly, "it has altered both of us. I prophesied in my own mind exactly what would happen on the day when we left Koollala."

Now, his Excellency was perfectly well aware that he had neglected Petrovna and young Evan, and, being aware of it, he was naturally all the more angry at having it brought to mind. He became for a moment very injured

and stately, and with a bow to the Russian he turned round on young Evan.

"You must come and see me," he said, with a brightness and geniality of manner which were not altogether real. Children are quick to see through this kind of assumption, and Evan read the manner perfectly, and recognized the restraint which lay under it.

"We shall see," pursued the peacemaker, "if we can't find something good for our young Evan. We will go and consult the cook, eh? What shall we say to grapes and bananas? What shall we say to apples and pears? And what, oh, what shall we say to a Maraschino jelly?"

Young Evan responded to none of these queries, but, with a defensive elbow raised, he looked across his arm at the smiling wickedness before him. The duke had fallen on one knee to address him, but at this reception of his friendly overtures he rose from the deck and turned, with a somewhat lowering countenance, on Petrovna.

"The boy, at least," he said, returning to his own language, "has no reason to regard me with any thing but gratitude. You have poisoned his mind against me, and I choose to remove him from your influence. Mr. Sparks!"

The officer, who had been lounging at a little distance, watching with some interest a scene he only half comprehended, stepped forward.

"There is, I believe, an empty state-room next to mine?"

"There is, sir," Mr. Sparks replied.

"Kindly see the purser or the captain, or whomsoever it may be necessary to see, and arrange that this boy shall be placed there. I wish to have him near me for the remainder of the voyage."

"Yes, sir," the officer answered, and, being requested to make the arrangement at once, departed for that purpose.

The duke, with a curt nod of the head to Petrovna, followed.

When the time came for his removal from Petrovna's society in the steerage, Evan yelled, fought, and struggled. The ship rang with his protestations, and two laughing sailors bore him, leg and wing, plunging and howling at each step, to his new quarters. For a whole day he was sulky and unmanageable, and refused whatever overtures of friendship were made to him. Finding after two or three abortive attempts at escape that he was to be kept in the more luxurious compartment to which he had been conveyed, he bolted himself in, and refused all communication with the outer world.

The captain at the dinner-table that night counselled the application of a stout rope's end as the best medicine for the young cub's insubordination ; but on the following day hunger drew the small badger from his den, and, being provided with such a breakfast as he had rarely made acquaintance with before, he began to find his allegiance to Petrovna weaken. The duke assailed him with an irrestible weight of argument.

"You can stop here and be good and happy," said his patron, "or you can stop here and be foolish and unhappy, but you shall stop here in any case. Nothing is being done to you which is not meant for your good."

In the depths of his own mind his Excellency knew very well that his one active impulse was to break the small imp's wilful spirit, but he didn't care to proclaim that fact.

"So long as you are good and quiet every-body will be kind to you. If you like to stop and sulk in your own room, you can starve. Nobody will try to hinder you if you are silly enough to do it. It is quite in your own hands. You shall be a good boy or a naughty boy, just as you like. If you are a good boy, every-body will try to

make you happy. If you are a naughty boy, nobody will care how miserable you are."

"I want to go back to Petrovna."

"You will not be allowed to go back to Petrovna," returned his patron. "You had better understand that at once. Now, you can be good and happy, or unhappy and miserable, just as you like. That is your affair, my young Evan."

Young Evan, like older people, succumbed to irresistible authority, and by and by began to like it. A child of eight may have had instilled into him the most admirable principles of radicalism and anarchy, and may yet find the fleshpots of Egypt desirable, and their contents toothsome. As a matter of course, he took his meals in the ship's nursery, but when once he had shown signs of subjection, his protector took lavish care of him, and all manner of delicacies were sent to him from the saloon luncheon-table, and his provision from the dessert after dinner was liberal enough to rejoice the whole mob of the ship's infantry.

The young Evan, being thus entrapped, like the panther in the fable, by the spices and luxury, remained for a while more or less well content. At times his conscience pricked him, and sometimes when he saw Petrovna lounging about lonely on the lower deck he felt guilty of desertion, without being quite able to accuse himself of any real dereliction from friendship. He had only done what he had been obliged to do, and had only discovered that, on the whole, he was glad to have been compelled by force. Except that he was strictly forbidden to leave that portion of the ship which was set apart for the first-class passengers, he had ample freedom, and was allowed to wander about exactly as he would.

It happened one sweltering tropic night, when the ship was swishing through an oily sea and under a starless and moonless sky, that he lounged as far aft as his boundaries

permitted, and there, peering through the rail, saw Petrovna seated below, smoking, within a yard or two of him. The Russian was alone, and just dimly visible in the light of a swinging lamp. Evan looked cautiously about him in the close dark, and, seeing nobody near, ventured to call out:

"Matey! I say, Matey!"

This was in a guarded whisper. Petrovna looked up at him, peering with contracted eyes.

"Who is that?" he asked. Then rising: "Oh, it's the little deserter."

"I ain't a deserter," hotly answered Evan; "I was made to come here, and I could not help it. You know that as well as I do."

"Ah, well, well," said Petrovna, and Evan could tell by the tone of his voice that he was smiling, "a prisoner is not a deserter. But, remember," he added seriously, "you have no right where you are. Your place is among your own people. You have told me what your father said to you in prison. You are never to forget that as long as you shall live."

"I sha'n't forget that," said young Evan. "I sha'n't forget it—never. You bet on that."

His voice was choking, for the merest allusion to his father's fate always had power to move him, and his father's words were oftener in his memory than any thing else he had ever heard or known.

"That is well," said Petrovna. "They're treating you kindly?"

"Oh, I'm first-rate. I wish I wasn't sometimes. I want to be sorry that I'm here."

"Flesh-pots of Egypt," said the Russian to himself, and then aloud:

"My little boy, remember always,—I may not be able to speak to you again,—but remember always what you owe

to the people who call themselves gentlemen. Your old matey is changed since he kept pigs at Koollala, eh? You don't know yet how much he is changed, but I know. He was once a friend of the poor, because he was one of them. Now that he is rich again, and an aristocrat, he is their enemy."

"My good Petrovna," said the tranquil voice of the duke, very close at hand in the darkness, "you're a liar. I haven't changed at all. It is only your own pig-headed obstinacy that has come between us."

The duke himself, clad in white linen, rose from the lounge chair on which he had been sitting and leaned over the rail.

"Why do you want," he asked, "to make bad blood between the child and me?"

"Because," Petrovna answered, "the child was in the right way before we started on this journey, and because you are leading him astray from it. There is no end to the corruption of riches. You were a man a poor six weeks ago. Now you are no more than an aristocrat."

"You irreconcilable old idiot," cried the nobleman, with a laugh, half of vexation and half of humor, "what do you propose that I should do? Shall I go back and feed pigs again at Koollala? Shall I disown my name, and throw my money into the sea? Am I behaving like a scoundrel because I take this unhappy little waif and trust to train him into a well-educated and useful citizen?"

He had fallen into his own tongue again, and Evan could no longer understand the conversation.

"The child's birthright," Petrovna answered, "is his intellectual freedom. He has cause enough behind him to be on the right side. It is a fine spectacle," he added scornfully, "to see a revolutionary turned aristocrat, and devoting himself to the creation of a *bourgeois*."

"There is no talking with you, my good Petrovna," the

other answered good-humoredly; and then, returning to English, he addressed Evan, laying a hand upon his shoulder:

"You have always liked me, my little friend, have you not? Tell me, now. In the old days at Koollala you used to like me very well?"

"Yes," said the boy, in a somewhat sullen and reluctant tone.

"And why did you like me? Was it not because I was kind to you always? Was I not kind to you always?"

Evan answered "Yes" again, and this time the less constrainedly.

"Well, now," said the duke, "I promise you if you are a good boy I will always be kind to you. You shall be well taught, and well fed, and well clothed, and when you grow up to be a man, and can think for yourself, you shall think exactly what you please, and I shall still always be your friend. Now, Petrovna, by what right do you attempt to stand between the boy and his welfare? What kind of career can you offer him if you persuade him to refuse my offer?"

Petrovna was silent.

"Come with me, Evan," said the duke.

The boy half reluctantly surrendered his hand, and allowed himself to be led away along the deck. It was many years before he next saw Petrovna.

END OF BOOK FIRST

Book Second

THE REAPING OF THE HARVEST

CHAPTER I

Fourteen years have gone by. The date is 1893, and the scene a dingy student's apartment in Paris.

A young man, tall and graceful in figure—a young man mustached and bearded, with deep, abstracted-looking black eyes, and a pale olive complexion, walked up and down the uncarpeted room with a newspaper proof-sheet in his hand, and a penholder held crosswise between his lips. The young man and the apartment were alike poorly furnished, and showed alike indications of having witnessed better days. The floor of the room had once been waxed and polished, but was now scored over everywhere with boot-marks, and here and there showed the bare and ragged fibre of the wood. There were clean spaces, oval and oblong, on the soiled wall, which declared that pictures and mirrors at no very distant date had hung there. The young man was attired in garments of fashionable cut which were wofully gone to seed. The edges of his cuffs and collar, well washed and starched, had begun to fray into threads, and the scissors unskilfully applied had cut them out of shape. The trousers were trodden at the heel. The shoulders of the coat shone with the gloss which comes of overwear. A button hung by one loose thread at the back of the waist, and another was missing altogether. The pale olive complexion was paler than it had a right to be, and the young man's cheeks were slightly

sunken, as if with privation. As he marched up and down the chamber, muttering to himself indistinctly past the penholder, which gagged his utterance, he paused now and then to glance at the proof-sheet, and, having read a line or two, invariably waved it with an air of triumph, and resumed his march with an aspect of renewed determination.

There were many proof-sheets on the unclothed, meagre table which stood in the centre of the apartment; and the corners of the room were untidily littered with heaps of newspapers. Steps sounded on the stair outside, but the occupant of the chamber took no notice of them. They paused at the door of his room. There was a loud knocking at the door, and the young man with an impatient "Halloa, there!" threw it open, and confronted his visitors with an instant change of manner.

"Come in, Mr. Quahar—Miss Quahar, I am honored beyond measure."

Mr. Quahar was Scotch—Scotch in the fringe of gray hair and whiskers, once of a fiery red, and now of a foxy white with many years; Scotch in the deep wrinkles, which looked as if they were cut in a mask of lignum vitæ; Scotch in the shaggy eyebrows, in the bulb of humor at either end of the upper lip, in the mouth, at once unctuous and secretive, and most Scotch of all in the light gray twinkling eyes, which looked on all things with an air of penetrating sagacity and droll appreciation at one and the same time.

He entered the room on its rightful occupant's invitation, and held the door open for Miss Quahar to enter. She was Scotch also, with that almost excessive fair pallor which is sometimes to be found among northern beauties, and hair like floss silk of an auburn or chestnut tinge. Her features were finely formed, and quite feminine, but they impressed the observer with an altogether masculine

sense of courage, purpose, and the capacity for clear thinking. Her gray eyes were as candid as the day, and as innocently courageous as a child's. The owner of the room closed the door, drew into position the two chairs the apartment contained, and begged the arrivals to be seated. The old man, with his hat in one hand and his walking-stick in the other, looked about him, with his lips twitching and his eyes twinkling in response to some inward humorous prompting.

"And this," he said at last, "is the market you've brought your pigs to!"

"Yes, sir," the young man answered with a laugh; "this is the market."

"Now, Evan Rhys," said Mr. Quahar, with a sudden tone of solemnity, "I've called to see you on a matter of the very greatest importance. I'm just fresh from reading that infernal article of yours in to-day's issue of that rag yonder."

He pointed the walking-stick at the litter of papers in one corner. The litter consisted entirely of copies of one publication. The title of the newspaper, visible here and there in ill-printed large black letters of a blockish shape, was *La Renaissance de l'Homme.*

"Suppose, instead o' christening the d——d thing the new birth o' man——"

"Father!" said the young lady.

"Your pardon's begged," he answered. "Supposing, instead o' christening yon murderous thing the new birth o' man, you'd called it Universal Death, ye'd ha' been nearer the title for the day's issue. What d'ye mean by it, and how long d'ye suppose that the Duc de Marais Castel is going to stand that kind o' nonsense?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, sir," Evan Rhys answered; "and I don't know that I very greatly care."

"But, man," the Scotchman answered, "you have a

right to care. It is your business to care. Lad never had a finer friend in this world than you found in him. You've an obligation to respect his opinions."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Quahar," said Rhys; "I have a right to respect my own conscience."

"Conscience!" cried Quahar. "He talks o' conscience with that devilish, bloodthirsty, damnable manifesto lying on the table there under his nose, and signed with his own name."

The girl laid a restraining hand upon his arm. "Father!"

"Your pardon's begged, Effie, my darling. But I just lose my temper at this advocacy of the wholesale murder of the innocents. Here's a young man that sets up in business as a public assassin, and talks about his conscience. I suppose that in the heart of you, Evan, you're perfectly well aware that you're an awfu' fool."

"I'm told so often enough," said Evan, with a sour and mournful smile. "I suppose it's only my native obstinacy which enables me to doubt it."

"I read the article only this afternoon," said the girl, in a soft and musical voice.

The old man's cacophanous tones broke upon her speech like the quack of a duck on the song of the blackbird.

"Listen to Miss Effie, my man. There's a heap o' worldly wisdom and common-sense hidden away in that little head o' hers, I tell you."

"I shall listen with pleasure, as I always do," said Evan, "to any thing Miss Quahar may have to say to me."

His eyes, and, indeed, his whole countenance, had grown with the passage of the years to an extraordinary melancholy, which had at times something altogether wild in it; but he turned upon the girl with a smile which was all the more bright and fascinating because of the Quixote lean-

ness of his countenance. It was evident enough that he smiled but rarely.

"Thank you," said Miss Quahar, raising a small gloved hand in warning against further interruption on her father's part. "I read the article only this afternoon, and I confess that I was very shocked and sorry to see your name attached to it. It is not true, Mr. Rhys, that you advocate wholesale murder, but it is quite true that an ignorant man reading what you have written might very well believe you to mean that."

"The condition of society——" broke out Evan, with an oratorical gesture.

"Is very varied," said the girl gently.

He stopped himself in the very beginning of a torrent of excited speech, and listened.

"In many cases," she went on, "it is very terrible. My father has told me of his own early struggles, and I know something of the condition of the poor in Paris. But will it help the poor to excite them to anger and hatred? Might it not be as useful to teach them thrift and honesty and sobriety?"

"Ah," said Evan, beaming on her. "You are one of those, Miss Quahar, who can afford to make war with a fan and a vinaigrette. A man needs sterner weapons."

"Let him alone!" cried the old Scot. "Look here, Evan. I have received from his Excellency this morning the usual monthly allowance of one thousand francs for you, and I am going to take it upon myself not to hand it over without an undertaking on your part. The duke's in ignorance of the fact that you've been spending your allowance—his money—for this last half year on that incendiary rag yonder. Now, I am in a position of responsibility and trust toward the duke, and if his eyes are not open to the fact, mine are. I'm not going to allow his money to be expended in that way without

his knowledge, as you very well know. You'll have no penny of his money to lay out on any such mischievous business. The allowance is made to you to enable you to prosecute your studies, and to live like a gentleman. You're not prosecuting your studies. You're wasting your time and your talents in the propagation of the most mischievous and damnable ideas I ever heard of, and you're living like a dog in a kennel. Now, if you'll just forgive me for putting the matter in a plain man's plain way, I'll tell you that that's no less than malversation of funds. I'll be no party to it."

"Very well, Mr. Quahar," said Evan. "You shall do exactly what your sense of duty prompts you to do, and on my side I shall ask for no greater freedom."

Again a rap sounded at the door. Evan cried: "Entrez!" and a magnificent Swiss entered, bearing a letter.

"I am bidden to say, M. Rhys," said the messenger, handing him a letter, "that his Excellency requests an immediate answer."

Evan, with a hasty word of apology to his visitors, broke the seal of the letter and read with an unmoved countenance. It was headed with the ducal insignia of the writer's house, and was dated in pale embossed plain letters from the Hôtel de Marais Castel, Quai d'Orsay.

"My dear Evan," it ran: "Tell the messenger at what hour it will be convenient for you to call upon me here. Make the hour as early as possible. I have to see you on business of the utmost importance to yourself."

Evan handed the letter to Quahar, who glanced over it and handed it back again.

"He's been told o' that screed o' rubbish," he said quietly, "and for the first time identified you with the responsible editor of the *New Birth of Man*."

He spoke with a voice of weary nausea, as if the very

utterance of the title tired and sickened him. "You'd best get away at once, lad."

"Yes," said Evan, "I suppose I had better. You'll excuse me, Miss Quahar."

She rose and held out her hand to him. He took it in his own, and held it a second or two longer than was necessary. His dark eyes burned over her, and his sallow face flushed, but the girl's look of quiet candor and innocent courage underwent no change.

"Let his Excellency know," said Evan, releasing her hand and turning upon the messenger, "that I will follow you at once. You will forgive me," he added, resuming his English as he turned to his visitors, and the Swiss departed, closing the door behind him. "I must make some change in my appearance before I go to the Quai d'Orsay."

"I wish you'd make some in your opinions," said Quahar, half pettishly—"whose adornment let it not be the plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of jewels, or the putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart. That would please the duke and me, and,"—with a sideway glance at his daughter,—"mair folk beside."

Evan, being left to himself a moment later, retired to an inner room, and there washed his hands and changed his coat. He came out, looking a trifle less seedy than before, and, emerging hastily upon the street, marched swiftly in the direction of the Quai d'Orsay.

A liberal education, an excellent though neglected tailor, and years of contact with all sorts of well-bred and intellectual people, had made the little ragamuffin of Koollala a gentleman in outward aspect. The snub-nosed boy, with a face freckled by Australian sun and wind until it looked like a toad's back, was barely recognizable in the tall, soldierly, bearded figure of the man who wore that too emaciated mask of almost transparent olive. The

doggedness and sadness of the boy were recognizable still in the doggedness and sadness of the man; but even there the very type of suffering and of sullenness was changed. It had been dull, inert, blunted, and was now informed with fire and cultured intellect. It might perhaps have been better and happier for the man, and no less better and happier for society, if the rage and grief of childhood had been left to smoulder at the plough-tail until it died in quiet ashes. But this is a great problem, and not fitly to be discussed in these pages. The genius of humanity has worked in many strange ways, and may yet work in ways still stranger. The contemporary chronicler sees too close to see well.

Evan reached the hôtel of his patron, and was admitted without delay. He passed through the noble hall, and up the magnificent staircase. Every thing at the mere entrance of the great house spoke of wealth and taste. The staircase was all marble, but the foot fell soundless on a thick pile carpet of deep crimson. The supports of the broad balustrade of black oak were of polished steel, and the brass rods which held the carpet in its place were of extraordinary solidity, and so lustrous that they shone like gold. Marble busts on porphyry columns and priceless antique bronzes ornamented the landings and the corridor; and the painted windows of the house made a dim religious light, as if the place had been a house of worship. It was to Evan's mind a house of worship for the mammon of unrighteousness—one of the many shrines which are built in all great cities to that shameful and shameless deity. The tall servant who preceded him softly and reverently opened the door, and Evan entered an anteroom. Another servant passed him to a further chamber, and a third announced his name to the occupant of yet another room. The Duc de Marais Castel was half sitting, half lying on a lounge covered with Utrecht velvet. A book-

rest with a student's lamp attached to it, as yet, of course, unlighted, swung easily at his elbow. He closed the book which lay upon the rest, but kept a right-hand fore-finger between the pages, as if to mark the place, his left hand stretched out languidly toward Evan, not in salutation, but as if to mark the spot at which he should arrest his footsteps. The young man paused, and bowed with the slightest possible inclination of the head. It might have been a gesture of derision, it was so slight, and had in it so little of gratitude or of courtesy. The Duc de Marais Castel had amply fulfilled his promise to Petrovna on that far-off day, in that far-off Koollala, on which he had first learned of his great inheritance. He had turned flaneur, and had done his business well. His benefactions to the poor were beyond counting. His pensioners, if from the time of his rearrival in Paris until now they could have been gathered together, would have formed quite a respectable army. As Petrovna had prophesied, he had long since ceased to be in the least degree revolutionary in his ideas; but his own intimate knowledge of human suffering had softened a heart always generous, and had made him an easy prey for every kind of adventurer known beneath the sun. His mustache and his close-cropped hair had grown snowy white, but his eyebrows had kept their color, and gave a marked distinction to his face. If a stranger had been told, knowing nothing of his history, that this incarnation of middle-aged dandyism had once kept pigs by way of making a living in a starved antipodean colony, he would have laughed at the mere baldness of the lies. But, then, the pig-keeping had only been an episode.

"You will find," said M. le Duc, "a copy,—may I be allowed to say a very dirty and ill-printed copy?—of a journal called *La Renaissance de l'Homme* on the secretary, there. Will you oblige me by looking at it?"

Evan crossed the room in the direction indicated, found the journal, and returned to his old place.

"There is," said M. le Duc, "an article on the first page which bears your signature. Will you confer upon me the privilege of hearing it read aloud?"

Evan bowed, folded the paper, found the article referred to, and began to read.

"I admit," said M. le Duc, at the end of the first paragraph, "that your French is excellent, and so far you confer credit upon my training. Go on, if you please."

"'Here and there,'" read Evan, "'is to be found an aristocrat of a more generous turn of mind. Here and there we meet with a man of great wealth who can afford to himself, amid all the other luxuries which make life pleasant to him, the luxury of doing a little good, relieving a little distress—a friend of the people who pays toll for millions by a tithe of mint and anise and cummin, without a thought of remorse. Such a man consumes in countless extravagances the bread of hundreds or of thousands, while he gains an ecstasy of self-complacence by offering here and there the heel of a loaf to some one of his innumerable victims.'"

The Duc de Marais Castel threw both hands abroad, losing the place he had hitherto marked in the volume he had been reading, and looked at Evan with a humorous reproach.

"Et tu, Brute!" he said, laughing.

The reader went on. He read with an obvious reluctance of constraint and awkwardness, which stole most of the fire from his periods. He had meant every word he had written, and now, being forced to repeat aloud, in the presence of his lifelong benefactor, the charges he had founded upon his patron's action, he felt rebuked and foolish and ungrateful.

"'So long,'" he continued, "'as this easy dole is accepted

with gratitude, so long, indeed, as it is not rejected with contempt and scorn, so long as the luxurious giver is regarded as a benefactor of his species, just so long will charity be the cloak which covers the curse of the whole world. It is sometimes to be lamented that all the wealthy and titled are not as hard of heart, as degraded in the enjoyment of their own selfish lusts, as the vast majority. The hands of the few sprinkle perfume upon a putrescent mass, the public nose sniffs the perfume gratefully, and the general common-sense is not keen enough to guess what lies below it. These benefactors of the poor are the poor's worst enemies, for were it not for them their race would long since have been recognized for what it is: the incubus of the world—the Old Man of the Sea choking the staggering Sinbad who carries him—the inert mountain which lies on the laboring breast of Enceladus.'"

"I say nothing," interrupted M. le Duc, "of the majestic mixture of your similes—whether Sinbad the Sailor sprinkled Etna with rose-water, or the Old Man of the Sea rides a cock-horse on a dunghill, or whether both do either, or either neither ; the nonsense is equally amusing. But do you seriously propose, my young friend, that I, for example, should put an end to your allowance in order that after fourteen years of the help and friendship received from me you shall have a proper right to hate me ?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Evan. "You place me in a position of extreme awkwardness."

"I am flattered," said his patron, "to find that you do so much justice to my dexterity ; but, on the whole, my poor, foolish Evan, don't you think it is yourself by whom you are placed in a position of extreme awkwardness ? Go away, my lad, resign this silly nonsense, and devote yourself to a life of usefulness. Ah, you may retort on me, I am not useful, and, since I yearly assume a form more and more globular, cease even to be ornamental. But, my

dear fellow, it takes all sorts to make a world. You know very well that you don't really mean all that nonsense. You have not so exaggerated an opinion of your own intellect as to suppose that you are so much wiser, so much clearer-headed, and so much more experienced than other men who have tried to heal the sores of the world, that you can afford to try such rash remedies as you have advised in that stupid article. You have not to fight with society. You have to fight with human nature. The world is a very big place, my little Evan, and you live in a very little corner of it."

"I have been told all this, sir," Evan interrupted.

"And more, no doubt," said the duke, "and more wisely and more eloquently. But, my dear child, I am old enough to be your father, and I have not treated you unkindly; and, honestly, I deserve a better return than this. You should really not spend a man's money, even if he were your enemy, in paying a barber to set the razor which is intended to cut his throat. I confess," he added airily, as if the matter were one of no consequence, "that I find something in it which is rather at war with my sense of loyalty. Bread and salt, and the tent of the Bedouin, you know, my dear Evan. You want to be accounted a dweller in the desert. Is it not worth while to remember the ancient maxims of the desert tribes?"

"I have always known, sir," said Evan, "that my opinions would be distasteful to you. I have been cowardly enough until now to hide them from you partly. When I wrote this article,"—he tapped the paper as he spoke,—"I resolved to sign it, and to put an end to my own cowardice."

"And to my good-will?" the duke queried.

"I expected that, sir."

"Now, really," the duke asked him, in a more serious tone than he had taken hitherto, "won't you consent to

be quiet for a little while? Go and travel—go out and see the world—see what democracy has done in the United States. See what democracy is doing in the English colonies. Travel France, and see what democracy is doing here."

"Democracy," the young man answered, "has been put upon its trial, and has failed. We shall have a democracy one day that will be worth having; but we shall never reach it by the old-fashioned road."

"You are quite sure of that?" the duke asked. "You are certain of your mission? You are so wise and so clear-headed that there can be no doubt about the ultimate success of the means you propose to employ? You are quite —quite—— What is your English word? I speak so little English lately. You are quite cocksure?"

"No reform, sir," answered Evan, "was ever offered to the world which was not encountered by conservatism with such arguments."

"Oh, I grant you," said the duke. "But will you take my scheme? Will you travel and observe, and will you for say two years unload your pen? Come—for your own sake, silly boy?"

"I cannot pledge myself, sir," Evan answered, "to disguise my opinions."

"Your opinions! Your opinions!" cried the duke. "Little egotist! There are twelve hundred millions of people in the world, and they all have opinions, and they are mostly not worth having. What are the chances of yours being inspired?"

"They are mine, sir," the young man answered, with a complete lapse into his own sullenness. "A man is responsible to himself for his own thoughts and actions only."

"Ohé," said the duke, "you allow me a personal latitude?"

The young man bowed, and if his first deference to his patron had been a little mutilated, the second was so far overdone that his protector found an open insult in it.

"I accept my personal responsibility, my dear Evan," he said, with great tranquillity, "and until you choose to moderate your present madness you may, so far as I am concerned, go to the devil." He struck a gong which stood upon a little table within easy reach of his hand, and the interview was over.

CHAPTER II

There is nothing so inexorable, so cruel, so impossible to fight against, as nature. To be born a fool is a great misfortune which affords no chance of amelioration. Next to nature in point of cruelty comes habit. A man may teach himself, or may be taught, to be a crank and a fanatic, and find that there is no reteaching him, no going back upon the road travelled. There were certain things in Evan Rhys's mind which did not reconcile themselves. He knew that he owed a great deal to his patient and easy-going patron ; and he knew that he had been spending that patron's money for a purpose which he could not possibly be supposed to sanction for a moment. He was behaving with undeniable ingratitude, and yet in his heart he knew himself to be grateful. Conscience, he told himself, was stronger than mere emotion. He believed with the whole force of his nature that he was right; he knew that he would be sunk deep in his own contempt if he did not give voice to the thoughts which filled him, and all the same he was very unsatisfied with his own conduct.

It was already late on a February afternoon, and a cheerless drizzle was falling. He walked, neither knowing nor caring in what direction his footsteps led him, along the river-side, where the open-air venders of books had covered their stock with tarpaulin, and stood, blue-nosed and patient, in no expectation of custom. The towers of Notre Dame stood like a pale water-color wash against the leaden blank of the sky, and were now and again half obliterated by the driving mist and rain. The chamber in which he had held his final interview with the Duc de

Marais Castel was still in his mind. Its warmth and brightness, and the solid and chastened splendors of the house, accented the chill and gloom of the sordid quays, the turbid river, and the tearful, stormy close of day. More by habit than resolve Evan struck off to the right, near the statue of Voltaire, and, walking rapidly, turned from left to right, and left to right again, until he reached a smoke-blackened and ancient street, where he could hear distinctly the clank of printing machinery, recognizable all the world over to the journalistic ear. He had only just distinguished it with an awakened mind when it stopped suddenly, and a curious sense of forecast fell upon him. Every-body knows the peculiar condition of mind in which a trifle of this sort takes importance. *La Renaissance de l'Homme* was in the act of being printed, and something or other had occurred to check the issue of the weekly number. It might be, as he knew very well, only a momentary interruption ; but he guessed, with an intuition so strong that it would not be disregarded, that the stoppage meant more than that. He quickened his pace to a run, dashed through a narrow open entrance, and ran full into the embrace of a gendarme, who held him tight, and demanded his name and business.

"My name," he responded, "is Evan Rhys. I am the editor and proprietor of the journal printed here."

"In that case, my friend," the gendarme answered, "you are my prisoner. Pray give yourself the trouble to come this way."

He marshalled Evan into the printing-room, and there were seven or eight more officers of the law. The office of the *Renaissance de l'Homme* had been raided, and its plant legally seized only a minute ago. He was just in time to witness the official impounding of his property. Langlois, the recognized printer, was leaning against a type-rack, blanched with terror, and murmuring that he

was not responsible, when Evan entered. The police made but short work of the business. The forms were stripped from the machine, all printed and written documents on the premises were packed, the very reserve galleys were impounded, and the whole of the spoil, being packed away in a cart, was removed for later examination, and Evan and Langlois were conducted to the local police-office. There, a formal charge being entered against them, they were bestowed for the night, and left to their own reflections.

The printer probably felt and thought otherwise, but to Evan this, the first taste of martyrdom, was delicious. It made him a personage to his own esteem. These unholy dogs of the law, he told himself triumphantly, saw the need to be afraid of him, and he indulged in unblurred visions of a trembling government. To his imagination the president marched up and down his gilded chambers, pale, and gnawing a nether lip, while he awaited with anxiety the arrival of his ministers ; Paris was stirred to its centre ; excited groups in the cafés discussed the event of the day ; and under gray sheets of rain and yellow gas-light on the boulevards people whispered the news to one another. The imagination of all these things was as full of solace as the fact could have been. A knowledge of the fact, indeed, might have been heart-breaking ; for none of the things the solitary and excited prisoner triumphed over were really in course of transaction. The *Renaissance of Man* was known at the outside to a few hundreds of people, and even to them the arrest of its issue was not of overwhelming importance. The martyr felt otherwise, however, and gloried in his chains until midnight, when he fell beatifically asleep prepared to face armies on the morrow. When the morrow came, he had nothing worse to face than a jack in office of the average juge d'instruction type, who barked at him in the common, imperative way of his tribe, and did his excellent French best to make

justice ridiculous and the attitude of the accused seem dignified by contrast with his own.

The court was fairly filled with seedy people, most of whom had nowhere else to go ; but seated among them was a gray man, respectably attired, who watched the proceedings with an interest in marked contrast with the indifference displayed by most of the steaming and ill-favored crowd. It had rained outside. The little court was closely packed, and the odor of garments drying on the bodies of their owners was pungent and choking, like that of the father of all foxes. Even a careless observer looking at the gray, respectably dressed man might have thought him in some points remarkable. He had a marble mass of forehead, eyes of an extraordinary melancholy wild sweetness, a snub nose, a loose and protrusive mouth, and a huge gray beard. The upper part of the head and face cried angel and philosopher : the broad, coarse base of the snub nose and the brute mouth said animal. The whole countenance was typically Slavonic. It was marked with intellect, gentleness, patience, courage, tenacity, and all manner of animalisms ; and it was wrinkled everywhere, like water under a cat's-paw of wind.

When the juge d'instruction had snapped and barked, and bullied and cajoled, and had exercised every faculty known to the law courts save those of dignity and judgment, and when the prisoners had been allowed to pose as men of dignity and saviors of society, the hearing came to an end. Evan and his comrade, the printer, who took courage, after the theatrical French fashion, from his companion's demeanor, were committed for trial, and taken back to last night's abode. The crowd melted away into the mist and rain of the streets, and the gray man called a fiacre, and was driven about his own business. He was present again when the case came on for trial barely a fortnight later. The proceedings here were as brief and

decisive as in the earlier court they had been long-drawn and futile.

In half an hour the business was over. Evan Rhys and Philippe Langlois were each condemned to a fortnight's imprisonment, and each ordered to pay a fine of five hundred francs. The plant of the journal was confiscated by the state, and it was ordered that all discovered copies of the journal itself should be destroyed. When the prisoners were removed, the gray man had an interview with an official of the court, and paid the fines. Then again he found a fiacre, and was driven home.

A fortnight later, in the gray and slush of a bleak spring morning, he was at the door of the jail from which Evan Rhys was discharged. The young man walked out proudly, in expectation of a popular reception for martyred valor. He was pale, and his cheeks were even thinner and more hollow than they had been. There were circles of bistre about his eyes, and altogether he looked like a man new risen from a sick-bed. There was no popular reception awaiting him, but the average blackguard or broken-hearted crowd which awaits every jail delivery in a great city stared at him, dull and incurious, as he came upon the street. There were bloated rascals in blue blouses, smoking, and hiding their pipes in both hands, as if the pipes were secrets, and as ugly as themselves. There were respectable parents whose children had gone astray, or at least had been caught for the first time ; wives awaiting the husbands who had been imprisoned for assaulting them ; pickpockets with a hospitable handful of sous ready to refresh comrades who had come under the rigors of the law.

Evan Rhys stood for a minute, looking about him and recognizing no human creature. Here, at least, valor and martyrdom were not to find their earthly reward. He buttoned his coat about him, jammed his hat upon his head,

and walked away. He felt a hand upon his shoulders, and turned.

"M. Rhys," said a voice for which he had no recognition, "has forgotten me this many years."

Evan stared hard at the speaker's face. He could make nothing of him. There was a dim dream of the man, to be sure, in his mind as having been somewhere seen before, but the dream eluded identification.

"Look well," said the stranger. "You will know me by and by."

Evan looked again, and looked hard, but the effort of memory still remained illusive.

"I fancy I ought to know you," he said at last. "Where have we met?"

"Do you remember Koollala?"

Instantly the unfamiliar lineaments of the stranger's face flashed into the remembered likeness of Boris Petrovna, and Evan held him with a beaming pleasure.

"I saw you in court at the first hearing, and again at the second. You puzzled me, but a good many years have gone by since I last saw you."

"We cannot talk here," said Petrovna. "I have been up and abroad this three hours, and, early as it is, I am famishing for breakfast. There should be some early restaurant hereabout. You, too, I presume," he added, with a smile, "have not yet breakfasted; or if at all, not too luxuriously."

They found a restaurant, entered, ordered breakfast, and were served. The hot and fragrant coffee was refreshing and restorative to a man who had had two weeks of prison fare. The eggs *à la coque*, cutlets and fried potatoes, the glass or two of petit bleu, awoke a new soul in the martyred savior of society, and when Petrovna had called for a glass of cognac for himself and his companion, and had produced a paper of cigarettes, life again had sunshine in

it, though the drizzle of the March morning smeared the window-panes, and the voice of the wind in the almost empty street was a noise of lamentation.

"And now," said Petrovna, when the meal was over, and he had paid the bill, "I want to have a serious talk with you. Come home with me. We are liable to constant interruption here."

Evan assented, Petrovna amiably chattering trifles by the way.

"*Bourgeois*, you observe," he said with a grin, when his rooms were reached—"respectably *bourgeois*. I have been here some time, and am registered as a *rentier*."

"You seem to have prospered since I saw you last," returned Evan.

"The cause," said Petrovna, "has prospered since you saw me last. No movement the world has ever seen has ever grown from such beginnings to such proportions in so brief a time."

Evan with shrugging shoulders glanced round the room, took in his companion's respectable overcoat, respectable boots, irreproachable linen, his gold-rimmed spectacles, and the gold watch-chain which dangled across his waistcoat.

"You are still attached to the cause?" he asked, with more than a suspicion of satire in his voice.

"You might speak more truly," Petrovna retorted, "if you said that the cause was attached to me. For years I have been its soul and centre, its heart and brain."

"Your services seem not to have been ill paid," said Evan.

Petrovna turned upon him with a peculiar smile.

"Paid," he echoed; "they have been paid by a year in the oubliettes, by exile to Siberia, by seven years, since I saw you last, in a Spanish prison. They have been paid by poverty and misery for more than half the years I can

count since the day of my birth. It is not for you to sneer at my payment, my young friend."

Evan hung his head a little at this rebuke, which was in part delivered with considerable fire. He had as yet seen but little of Petrovna since their new meeting, but he had seen enough to know that he was ordinarily calm and reticent, and he argued that it took a good deal to excite him to such a pitch.

There was no renewal of the discussion until Petrovna himself broached it again after dinner that same evening. He had taken Evan to a restaurant, and had given him an excellent meal. Then he had slid away to enter into talk with a stranger who sat at a corner table. Evan, not knowing what the transaction signified, saw Petrovna empty his pockets apparently of all their contents, and hand over every thing to the stranger. A pocket-book, a handful of gold and silver coin, the gold watch and chain Petrovna wore, and what looked like a roll of notes, were passed from one to the other. The Russian came back smiling to the table at which Evan sat, jingling in his hand two pieces of copper money.

"That is for you," he said, laying a gros sou upon the table, "and this,"—holding up another between thumb and finger,—"is for me."

Evan looked enquiry, but said nothing.

"You speak of what you have done," said the smiling Petrovna. "Now, I tell you that you have done nothing, endured nothing. If you have the courage,—pluck is your English word, I think,—you shall come with me armed with that one piece of money, and you shall see what it is to spend forty-eight hours in Paris at this season of the year with no better provision than that. I am older than you, but I submit myself to the same ordeal. Are you ready to face it?"

"Lead where you like," said Evan. "I shall follow."

They passed into the night together. The wind had changed, and now came from due north-east, clanging amid overhanging signs, and roaring in the chimney-pots, and charging with bitter gusts at the corners of the streets. Not many were abroad, and the few who faced the weather walked hurriedly, with bent heads and rounded shoulders.

The pale moon climbed over the roofs, and shone down amid the clouds with a gusty alternation. In a while the flying scud massed itself together, and the faint yellow disk vanished. Then the wind dropped, and a burst of stinging rain came down.

"We shall miss our two sous' worth of fried potatoes in the morning," said Petrovna.

"Will that matter?" asked Evan.

"Not at all," the elder man answered.

They were both thinly clad, and miserably, considering the weather; and the chill of the icy rain and the breath of the reviving wind began to find its way to the marrow of their bones. They struck into a brisker pace, but the prison fare of the last fortnight had left Evan somewhat enfeebled, and after a few hundred yards he began to gasp, and shortly came to a stand-still.

"We shall assuredly miss our two sous' worth of fried potatoes at this rate," said Petrovna. "We are yet better off than many. At least we can buy a few hours of shelter, and we have no right to be hungry before morning."

This time Evan returned no answer. Spots of white began to fleck the pavement, disappearing almost as soon as seen. In a minute or two the snow-flakes were eddying everywhere, whirling down from the darkness, and fading from the muddy pavement as they touched it. The feel of the pavement grew pasty and gelatinous to the feet, and the snow began to lie ever so little in gray, wet patches. The patches spread and whitened fast on all level places. The

street kennels and the puddles kept their gloom, save for flashes of dim fire, caught by reflection from the lamps which lined the road, or shone here and there from the windows of a *gargotte*. In half an hour the wayfarers were whitened with moist and clinging snow. Evan plucked off the soft wide-awake he wore, and beat from its brim twice its own weight. Then he swept his arms and shoulders, and beat his body with both arms.

"This will never do," said Petrovna. "We have chosen an unfortunate night for our expedition. We have always home before us when we choose. Shall we turn?" There was a distinct touch of mockery in his tone.

"You may if you like," returned Evan. "It is not my way to make a bargain for the sake of breaking it."

"Allons, done!" cried Petrovna cheerfully. "This recalls my beloved Siberia."

"D—— Siberia!" said Evan, with sudden emphasis.

"With all my soul!" Petrovna answered, laughing.

The wind so drove the moist snow that at each time of speaking flakes of it flew into the month, and the freezing air bit at the tonsils. Petrovna turned his back upon the storm and halted.

"Can you stand a night of this?" he asked. "Or shall we ask shelter, and forego breakfast in the morning?"

Evan was blue with cold, and when he answered, his teeth chattered noisily. He would have given the world to have hidden this sign of distress, for he was there to play the Spartan.

"You are the leader of this enterprise," he answered; "it is my business to follow."

"Follow, then," said Petrovna.

They were at the door of a wide hall, dimly lighted by a single lamp, and approached from the street by three or four flagged steps, built in a semicircle. The floor of the hall was thickly caked with mud. From a side room on

the ground floor came a sickly gleam of light, and a noise of riotous voices.

Petrovna led the way, and they came into a lofty chamber with what had once been a noble fireplace. A great fire of wood and peat smouldered on the hearth, and the room was dimly illuminated by two or three lamps, which were more prodigal of odor than of light. Seated here and there were great clumsy tables of blackened wood, with benches drawn up to them, and at and on the tables sat as choice a sample of both sexes of blackguardism and rascaldom as even Paris could show. A man with a carbuncled nose and pins' heads of eyes sat drunk with a comrade on his knee. He embraced that comrade, as foul a ruffian as himself, with maudlin terms of endearment, while the woman, who had just escaped from his caress and had substituted the male abomination, shrieked with drunken laughter from a corner. This comedy had too much of an air of every day about it to excite the attention of the crowd. They played dominoes, they drank, they discussed politics in the grisliest terms, they slept and snored. They engaged in every diversity of employment, but in one matter they were unanimous. They fed the air with odors, and the smell of unwashed humanity, and stale raiment drying in the heat, fought hard with the exhalations of the lamps. The blended airs were loathsome, and to come on them rapidly from the raging freshness of the storm-driven streets was to be gripped with nausea.

A man came forward with an air of authority, and asked with what he should serve the new-comers.

"You have a sou, comrade?" asked Petrovna of Evan, with a feigned voice of humility. "I have mine."

"You are late," said the host. "You will barely find a place. You know the way?"

Petrovna nodded. The man accepted the two copper pieces and dropped them into a capacious canvas pocket

which hung at his stomach. He turned on his heel, and the Russian, with a sidelong beckoning nod to Evan, made his way upward through the shadows of a broad staircase with a balustrade of oak. The filthy house had been a mansion once upon a time, and wealthy people had lived in it. It was strange to think that not a lost wretch who found a shelter within its walls had had a deeper tumble from respectability than the house itself.

Evan followed his guide into a great waste chamber, which might have served as an assembly-room—an apartment with so lofty a roof that the single oil lamp burning beneath it left it invisible. At his first step forward a voice cursed and snarled. He had trodden by inadvertence on a sleeper's nose. Scores and scores of noses gave forth a sleepy music. Some purred, some gasped, some snarled like a dog with a bone, some two or three dealt on the air a ponderous organ note which seemed to vibrate in the floor, and this profound bass knitted all the other tones together as the blast of the trombone unites the wandering fancies of a German band.

Men and boys of all ages, in rags which showed pale trenches of flesh, and boots that leaked out mud-stained toe or heel, lay so thickly scattered on the floor that it was difficult to pick a way among them. The path of the novice was marked by writhings and curses, for when he had once tripped, he was compelled to stumble forward at any hazard.

At last he found room to sit in with his body against a wall, down which an unwholesome moisture rolled. The chill of the night liquefied the breath of a hundred sleepers and more, and, like their more moneyed friends below, the gentry here were unanimous in stinking. Wet, foul raiment in the act of drying predominated, and the dirty lamp added its sickening quota. At every inspiration the air seemed to glide down the throat like a snake, so foul it was, so thick and dense.

"This is an agreeable change," Petrovna said, lolling his back against the wall, and cautiously stretching out his legs. "This is an agreeable change from the dormitory of the Lycée. Eh?"

He spoke in English, and an English voice near at hand crashed out with an execration.

"Hold your d—— cackle!" cried the voice.

There was a groaning murmur as the tired wretches stirred and turned, and then the nasal concert went on again in full blast—hiss and chuckle, and ventriloquial moan of far-away ship's siren, and spurting breath as of a swimmer against the wave, and the curt snort of the supercilious hog, and under all, and over all, and entwined with all, the massive voices of the two or three.

The sleepy chorus, the heavy air, the languid heat which succeeded the biting cold, all tended toward a swoon into insensibility rather than sleep, and in a little while Evan succumbed. The light flickered, the wavering noises blended, and all on a sudden, with a little shudder of sickness and returning warmth and comfort and repulsion, he lost consciousness of his surroundings. He awoke, with a head like lead, to hear a voice bawling with the monotony of long usage:

"Messieurs, minuit a sonné. Les officiers sont à la porte. Douze heures! Douze heures! Enleve toi, donc, cochon! Minuit, minuit!"

He saw that Petrovna was rising to his feet, and that the sleepy crowd was surging and crawling.

The monotone went on, and a swinging lantern seemed to punctuate its phrases.

"Il faut partir! Minuit a sonné! Enlevez-vous, messieurs. Il faut partir!"

The dreadful, pitiable crowd arose, and melted away. Men stumbled down the broad staircase, rubbing their eyes and yawning. A great-coated officer of police, with

snow on his shoulder like an epaulet, stood watching to see that the room was cleared.

The snow outside whirled as if in a tourmante, and on the ground it lay thick, smeared by a hundred bestial feet. The wretches wandered devious, shuddering, with humping shoulders and self-embracing arms. Their tattered foot-gear sobbed and sucked at the wet pavement.

"What is this?" asked Evan, dizzy in the scourged night air after the fetid atmosphere of the room in which he had fallen asleep. "I thought we had secured a night's lodging."

"The place is not licensed as a lodging-house," returned Petrovna, "and after midnight the patron has no right to harbor any body. We are free of Paris until daybreak. We must either march or freeze."

Once more Evan followed the leader's footsteps. His mind was in a haze, and he dreamed as he ploughed his way. On a sudden Petrovna paused, and Evan paused also. He lifted his eyes and knew the surroundings. They had been for many years familiar to him. He was on the Quai d'Orsay, and before the hôtel of the Duc de Marais Castel. Lights gleamed in every window. Over the whole road ran the tracks of wheels, and the snow was churned to a gray paste. Even now late comers to some festivity within doors were being set down.

"You know the interior of that house fairly well?" Petrovna asked.

"Fairly well," Evan answered, with an inward sense of bitterness.

"Is it just?" asked his companion, gripping him tightly by the arm. "Is it the will of Heaven, do you think? You have seen what you have seen. You know what goes on here!" He pointed with a passionate hand to the illuminated house. "The price of a table ornament—the cost of a bouquet—would have housed, would have fed,

them all. Shall it last? You, child of the people; you, son of a murdered father; you, descendant of generations of the oppressed—shall it last?"

"No," said Evan Rhys. "By God! it shall not last."

Petrovna changed from fire to ice in a second.

"The gulf is a little too wide, you think?"

"Yes," Evan Rhys answered. "The gulf is a little too wide."

CHAPTER III

They crossed the river and traversed the Place de la Concorde. They must needs move to keep their blood flowing and their limbs from stiffening. At the foot of the Rue Castiglione they came upon an old man plodding through the freezing slush at the side of a donkey-cart. He paused to light his pipe, and they saw that he was a very old man indeed, and bent with infirmities and years. He had a frosty stubble of a beard, and his rheumy old eyes were rimmed with red.

"Comfortless weather to be out in," said Petrovna.

The old man gave a suck at his pipe, and laid his hand on the rein of his patient ass, who stood hanging his head in the roadway, as if reconciled to all things.

"Il faut vivre," said the old fellow.

"Il faut mourir aussi, vieux camarade," returned Petrovna.

"C'est encore plus vrai," the old man answered, and went on his way with his dumb companion.

"What brings him out at such an hour?" asked Evan, hugging himself as he stared, shivering, after him.

"Who knows?" said Petrovna. "There are many ways of making a living in a great city."

It was between one and two o'clock in the morning, and the streets were like a desert. Even the police seemed to have left them. The column in the Place Vendôme was barely visible against the lowering sky, and even the tops of the houses were indistinctly seen. The night seemed to grow more bitter and inhospitable moment by moment. In the profound silence of the street the droppings of the

thaw sounded distinct and noisy, though they would have been inaudible by day, when the loud clatter of traffic was awake.

"Let us keep stirring," said Petrovna, "or we shall freeze."

"Ugh!" returned Evan; "this is an experiment in poverty with a vengeance."

"It is not even an experiment," his companion declared. "We miss the one ingredient which makes the dish of poverty nauseous."

"And what is that?"

"Despair. We are cold and wet, to be sure, but we have left food and warmth behind us, and can go back to them at any minute if our courage fails. We have learned as much at least as this jaunt could teach us. Do you care to go on with it?"

"I have told you already," Evan answered, "that I follow my leader."

"Ah, well," said Petrovna, with a laugh, "since you are not to be tempted, let us talk about other things. We are as private here as we should be in the middle of the Great Sahara. Let me put a question to you, my young friend. Are you one of us, or are you only one of those who are determined and courageous on paper?"

"What do you mean by 'one of us'?"

"When I ask if you are one of us," said Petrovna, pausing to lay a fore-finger upon his breast, "I mean to ask if you are one of those who are determined that at all hazards the present miseries of the world shall cease."

"At all hazards?" Evan answered.

"At all hazards," Petrovna repeated.

"That is not a question to be lightly answered," said the young man, after a moment's indecision.

"No," Petrovna assented, "it is not a question lightly to be answered. Think it over as we walk."

They went on through the desert streets, Petrovna steering northward more by hazard than design, and Evan, sunk in many conflicting thoughts, keeping shoulder to shoulder with him.

"He that is not with us is against us," said Petrovna in a while. "The time for the war of words is over. We must come to deeds."

"Let me think," said Evan impatiently.

"Good," returned the elder man; and so for another space they went on in silence.

"For one thing," said Evan, "you and I don't know very much about each other. It might be worth while on both sides to know a good deal more before we enter into any compact."

"I know almost as mu h of you," returned Petrovna, "as I need to know. Ever since I left my Spanish prison I have kept an eye upon you more or less."

"What brought you in a Spanish prison?" Evan asked.

"There are people," the elder man responded dryly, "who have always regarded my political ideas as extreme. I was credited with an intention to translate Christ's vicar to his rightful place in heaven—or elsewhere."

"You were engaged in a plot against the Pope?"

"It was so concluded," said Petrovna. "I lay seven years in prison, but fortunately not under my own name. Since then I have watched you pretty closely, for I have always had hope of you. As for me, my young friend, you may secure my credentials from any man who knows the interior history of the propaganda for this last thirty years."

"How do I know that you have not turned mouchard since the day I left you at Marseilles?"

"That is a very right and just enquiry," Petrovna answered, perfectly unmoved. "It is one which can be answered very easily; but you are justified in making it. I like you, indeed, the better for your caution."

"I will answer you better," said the young man, "when I know you better."

He had scarcely spoken the words when a tremendous booming noise at a little distance broke upon the air, and a second later he was hurled from his feet, and thrown with great violence against a street-door. He stared about him half stunned, unable to form an idea of what had happened. Petrovna was scrambling from the wet pavement a dozen yards away, and, when he had reached his feet, stood feeling himself all over, cautiously, as if in search of breakages.

"That was Laurent, for a million," Evan heard him murmur. "Are you hurt?" he asked, a second later.

"Not so far as I can tell," the lad answered, in a bewildered way. "What was it?"

There had been a general crash of falling glass, which neither of them had noticed, and already excited voices were crying and calling aloud in every house in the neighborhood. The street, which had been as desert as the sea, and as silent as the grave, had suddenly broken into mad clamor. A huge volume of gray smoke floated over the house-tops, and in a very little while began to lighten and to assume a reddish hue. Petrovna, looking in the direction from which it came, muttered to himself once more, loud enough for his companion to overhear:

"That is Laurent assuredly."

In an almost incredibly short space of time the roads were crowded with half-clad people, who rushed toward the scene of the disaster. Petrovna seized a lad who clattered by him wrapped in a trailing blanket.

"What is the name of this street?" he asked.

"Rue de Pot d'Etain."

Evan saw him shake his head with the air of a man who had received confirmation of a fear. The companions hurried along for a distance of three or four hundred yards, and came upon a scene of awful devastation. The houses

hereabouts were all of a weather-stained and sordid type, but they were lofty. In one place on the right-hand side of the street, looking northward, there was a huge wedge-shaped gap with rough edges, and in front of it the road was covered with *débris*. On the other side of the way the houses for a space of fifty yards or so looked as if they had sustained a terrible bombardment. Every thing was clearly visible now by the light of the flames which sprang from the base of the huge ragged wedge. The awe-struck, curious, or stupid faces of the crowd, the unkempt hair, the wild deshabille in which every-body was attired, the ghastly figures, many of them cut and bleeding, which stood rending the night with shrieks of pain and terror, were all as clearly seen as if it had been broad noon.

The police came hurrying up in force, and, pressing back the maddened people, formed a cordon about the ruins. The fire-engines came thundering along. Calm, stalwart men appeared upon the scene with stretchers for the transport of the wounded. Evan and Petrovna found themselves side by side in the fore front of the crowd, so tightly packed and so urged forward by the pressure of the multitude that an escape from it seemed hardly possible. The wounded were to be counted by scores, and for hours to come it would be out of question for any man to estimate the number of the dead. Everywhere, amid balks of timber and heaps of brick-work and great blocks of stone and piles of broken stucco, there were mutilated remnants of humanity. There was a smell of roasting flesh upon the air, and Evan shuddered with a repulsion so terrible that it shook him from head to feet, and inspired his very soul with nausea. It seemed as if the whole district were afoot by this time, and the tumult of excited voices rose like a storm. Thousands of throats vociferated at once; but out of the unformed chaos and babel of noise one phrase seemed gradually to grow:

"Les anarchistes!"

Hundreds of voices spoke the words together. "The work of the anarchists! Ah! those vile anarchists! Down with the anarchists!" The cry sprang everywhere, louder and louder, wilder and wilder, more and more savage. Evan forgot his horror at the scene before him in recollections more personal to himself. If at such a moment of public delirium he were seen and recognized, he would not have set his life at a pin's fee. He looked at Petrovna, who stood calm and observant amid all the roaring din, and watched the action of the firemen as coolly to all appearance as he would have watched a spectacle upon the stage. It looked for a while as if the two were doomed to remain there for hours at least; but the elements had a word to say to that question. A steady, heavy rain began to pour, and the crowd so greatly thinned that in the course of half an hour retreat was possible. Petrovna tapped Evan upon the shoulder, and the two glided away.

From the Château Rouge they had found but a confused route to Batignolles, wandering with no other aim than to pass away the hours of the miserable night. Now Petrovna led the way resolutely, though it was half an hour before Evan, to whom that quarter of Paris was strange, discovered that his guide was leading in the direction of his own apartments, at the far end of the Boulevard Voltaire, near the Place de la Nation. The *concierge* there was asleep in his glass box by the side of a dimly burning lamp, but at Petrovna's call he mechanically pulled a string which released the inner door from its fastening. In the living-room the last embers of a wood fire still gleamed on the hearth. Petrovna knelt down and piled up a heap of logs from the basket beside the fireplace, and then, pulling down the reverberator, had a great blaze roaring up the chimney in a minute or two.

Evan dropped into an arm-chair, wet to the skin, chilled to the bone, and sickened by the memory of the scene so lately witnessed. His companion in the meanwhile found a bunch of keys, opened a buffet, and drew from it a decanter of cognac and a couple of wineglasses. He filled them both, and pushed one toward Evan, who, after looking at him dimly, and without apprehension for an instant, seized the glass, drained it, and held it out for more. Petrovna filled it up a second time, and, having emptied his own glass, began to divest himself of his soaked coat and waistcoat.

"I can supply you also with the material for a change," he said, "and you had better make it. Our experiment in poverty is over for the time being. I have other fish to fry."

He bustled into his bedroom, and returned with a suit of clothes, which he threw upon the floor.

"You are taller and slimmer than I am," he said, "and they will not fit you very picturesquely, but they are better than nothing."

He turned again into the bedroom, and Evan sat in the arm-chair stupefied. Petrovna was back in five minutes, and found him thus, staring vacantly at the reverberator, which by this time had grown to a dull red, and made a loud crackling sound in the heat.

"Take a little more cognac," said the Russian. "You are overtired. I should have remembered your two weeks of prison fare before I put you to such an ordeal."

He laid a hand upon Evan's shoulder as he spoke; but the young man rose with a sudden and unexpected vividness of movement, and stared at him with wide-open eyes, full of horror.

"You know something of what happened to-night?" he said.

"Yes, my friend," Petrovna answered with tranquillity. "I know something, and I can guess the rest."

"Is that the fruit of your progaganda?" the younger man demanded, shaking all over, half from the clinging cold of his wet clothing, and half from horror.

"No," said Petrovna quietly. "It was a pure and simple accident."

"I heard you speak twice of Laurent. Who is Laurent?"

"You had better change your wet clothes," said the elder man imperturbably. "We will talk together afterward. It is dangerous to sit as you are doing, let me tell you."

"I will take no aid or service from you," Evan answered, "until I know something more."

"You will do as you please about that," the other retorted. "But I have many things to see to."

He opened a secretaire which stood upon a little table in one corner of the room, and began to rummage among its contents.

"Do you mean to tell me," cried Evan, advancing toward him passionately, "that you make war against the suffering and laborious poor? Is this night's work part of the propaganda by deed you talk about?"

"No," said the elder man, "it is no part of the progaganda. I have already told you it is an accident. The cause has suffered a great disaster, and I very much fear we have lost a great man, one of our most capable, our bravest, and most devoted."

Evan started as if a new light broke in upon him.

"Laurent," he murmured once or twice, "Laurent."

"You should remember him," said Petrovna. "He was not so long ago a comrade of your own at the School of Chemistry."

"I thought he had left Paris. I understood he had gone to London."

"He spent a little time in London," Petrovna responded, busying himself over the contents of the secretaire by the

light of a candle. "He returned two years back, and has since been engaged in experiment and investigation. I am afraid we have lost him."

"You think," asked Evan, "that the explosion took place in his laboratory?"

"That is almost an absolute certainty," said Petrovna; "but we cannot yet be sure that he was there. It might have happened in his absence. If he were dealing with explosives of a very sensitive nature, as he might have been, a cat, a rat, or a mouse might have been the cause of the mischief. We shall know more in the course of the day, but I shall be sorry if we have lost Laurent."

"You take all this very coolly," cried Evan.

"Like a veteran, my young friend," the other answered. "I have seen too much to be easily disturbed."

He went on calmly sorting the papers he searched for in the little secretaire, and presently, by the light of the candle, made up a number of them into a small bundle. He went over this minutely, and then, walking deliberately to the fireplace, dropped the papers one by one into the flames, beating down with great care such fragments as rose upon the hot wind of the fire, until the last fragment was consumed. To Evan this was significant of a fear lest his apartment should be visited by the police and searched; but if Petrovna were disturbed by any such apprehension, he gave no other outer sign of it.

"Come," he said at length; "you will decide in your own way in your own time. In the meanwhile I am dressed for the day, and will take the arm-chair. You, since you have not thought fit to change, had better take the bed. My dear child," he added, in answer to a movement of objection, "I pledge you to nothing. I ask you for nothing. You shall choose for yourself, and you will choose none the less clearly for a night's rest."

What with the long hours in the nipping air, the emo-

tion he had passed through, the two wineglasses of cognac he had taken, and the change of temperature, the young man was utterly worn out. He argued sleepily within himself that it was of no use further to fight against the general condition of things; and so, almost falling asleep as he undressed, he crept into Petrovna's bed, and lay there like a log, until a loud knocking at the outer door awoke him. He saw that it was broad daylight, and the fragrant odor of strong coffee assailed his nostrils at the moment at which he turned. Petrovna's voice sang out quite cheerfully in the next room, calling on the person who knocked to wait a little. Evan sat up in bed, wondering if this were a domiciliary visit from the police. The first words of the new-comer, uttered as soon as Petrovna had opened the door, disabused his mind of this fancy.

"You heard?" asked a voice in English.

"I was there," returned Petrovna, closing the door as he spoke.

Evan conjectured some signal of caution made by Petrovna, for the visitor's voice sank into an inaudible whisper, and a hand silently closed the door between the bedroom and the living-room. Then voices went on in a guarded murmur, and Evan was falling half asleep when his host entered the room, and laid his clothes upon the bed.

"I dried these for you last night," he said. "Coffee is ready. You had better get up and dress."

The lad obeyed, and, attiring himself in the well-lighted bedroom before a looking glass, thought himself seedy and repulsive-looking. His clothes, which were not of the best material to begin with, had been carelessly dried, and had shrunk considerably, so that his wrists and ankles stuck out gauntly. His linen was yellow, crumpled, and disreputable; and his boots were covered with a paste of half-dried mud.

While he was surveying himself distastefully, Petrovna's

deep voice called out to him to say that coffee was growing cold. He answered the summons, and found himself in the presence of two strangers. He had guessed at one only; and he knew by a kind of instinct which of the two it was of whose presence he had been unaware. This, to take him first, was a secretive-looking, small man, who stood, a little bent, with his hands clasped together. He was dressed in respectable black broadcloth; and was so spick and span that he might have been purposely attired that morning for a *bourgeois* wedding. He wore a white tie, and his linen was unexceptionable. Despite the condition of the streets, there was no spot upon the lustre of his boots. In face and attitude he was stealth personified; and Evan noticed from the first that except when his eyes were veiled they were never still for a single second, and that he never by any chance looked in the face of any body whose glance for the merest instant challenged his own. So long as he himself was unregarded he would steal quick, darting glances from face to face; but at the moment of encounter with another's gaze his eye dropped, and his face was like a shuttered window. The other stranger was of a different type—a man tall, gaunt, and upright; a man who threw back his shoulders and folded his arms with a theatrical exaggeration of the military attitude. He was hook-beaked and grizzled, and his face, tanned by the sun and wind of many climates, was deeply wrinkled. He wore a great, swaggering military mustache; and his eyes, which were of an astonishing pallor,—the palest conceivable gray blue, with a pin-point of black pupil,—had a curious inward look. But for the intense speck of dark in the middle of these strange orbs they would have looked like those of a blind man.

"M. Georges Dusaulx," said Petrovna, waving a hand in the direction of the small man in the respectable broadcloth, "Mr. Evan Rhys."

Evan bowed, and the little man cast one furtive glance at him, nodded, and began to march with cat-like steps up and down the room, studying the pattern of the carpet with great intentness.

"If you have not yet taken coffee, gentlemen," said Petrovna, "will you join us?" The gentlemen had taken coffee. "Can I offer you a glass of cognac this bitter morning?"

"Not for me," cried M. Georges Dusaulx, with emphasis. He waved both hands vehemently against the suggestion, but the military man received the proposal with a loud and enthusiastic "Ha! Ha!" and rubbed his hands.

Petrovna unlocked the buffet in which he kept his decanter, and as he stooped before it said: "Your pardon, general; I had forgotten to introduce my young friend. General Vincent, Mr. Evan Rhys."

The general blinked his pale eyes, and nodded in a very curt and military manner.

"I beg you not to suppose, sir," he said, "that because I bear a military title I ever held the commission of the queen. I gained my rank in the republic of Del Oro, and my sword has always been at the service of the oppressed."

Petrovna set the decanter of cognac and a pair of glasses on the table. As he did so he glanced at M. Dusaulx, who caught his eye for the mere fraction of a second.

"No, no, really," said the eminently respectable person. "Let me be candid with you." Evan found himself smiling. The ideas of candor and M. Dusaulx seemed curiously apart. "I have a temptation in that direction, and my only plan is not to yield."

The warrior filled his wineglass to the brim, and sipped it with an air of relish. The little man prowled up and down the room, casting swift and furtive glances at the decanter.

"That is an astonishingly fine cognac," he said after a while. "I remember it."

"Common stuff enough," returned Petrovna, munching at his roll and sipping at his coffee.

"My dear Petrovna," said the other, "you do yourself an injustice. You do that admirable liquor an injustice." He began to fondle the decanter with both hands. Then, having turned it upside down, he withdrew the stopper and smelled at it with the manner of a connoisseur. Next he touched it with the tip of the finger, and applied the finger to his tongue. "Yes," he said, with the doubtful accent of an enquirer reluctant to commit himself, "I *think* it is the same. I really fancy I remember it." With this he poured out half a glass and sipped at it. Evan, watching him, saw a red flush steal into his drooping eyelids, and spread over the cheek-bones. He emptied the glass suddenly with an air of decision. "That," he said, "is the same brandy," and, turning away from the table, with the decanter in one hand, and the wineglass in another, filled up again to the brim, and tossed the fiery spirit down his throat as if it had been water.

Again a knock sounded at the door, and Petrovna rose to answer it. This time a portly elderly gentleman, with a clean-shaven face and long silver hair, entered the room. He wore a look of marked benevolence, and the profusion of his white hair and the scrupulosity of his attire gave him the aspect of a college professor. His eyebrows were jet black and very mobile. When he removed his hat, he displayed a beautiful dome of bald forehead.

"I see," he said, looking about him with a smile, "that you have heard."

"Yes," said Petrovna, "we have heard. Allow me to introduce to you, sir, my young friend Evan Rhys."

"I have the honor," said Evan, "to be known already to M. Paul Cadoudal."

M. Paul Cadoudal, in effect, was no other than the professor of logic and rhetoric in that great educational institution in which the young man had been bred. Evan was mightily surprised to find him here, though all the world knew that the eminent logician had a theoretical sympathy with the most advanced forms of social revolution. His presence in this room, and his knowledge of this society, seemed to imply something more than a theoretical adherence.

Almost upon his heels came a further arrival, a man in thick boots and a blue blouse of glazed linen. This person, who was announced as M. Joseph Ducos, wore a look of simple brutality and stupidity. His bullet head had been recently cropped by a prison barber, and his debased face was purplish black with the unshorn beard of a week. He seemed to be at perfect ease in the company in which he found himself, and to be known by all.

"We have matters of moment to discuss," said M. Cadoudal, drawing off a black kid glove, and passing a hand of exquisite whiteness through his silvery hair. "Are you responsible for your young friend, Petrovna?"

"Yes," said Petrovna, "I am responsible for my young friend."

Had a second intervened between the question and the answer, Evan Rhys himself would have spoken to the contrary effect. At least, he thought afterward that he would so have spoken. But the chance was gone, and he was burning with curiosity to know what plan of action had brought together so strangely assorted a body of men. Petrovna, exile and Nihilist, and General Vincent, soldier of fortune, were easy enough to account for; but Cadoudal was the representative of all the graces of life, Dusaulx, a well-to-do dealer in pinchbeck jewelry in the Palais Royal, and M. Joseph Ducos was an evident jail-bird, carrying the insignia of scamp and drunkard boldly stamped upon him from head to heel.

"I had expected Frost here," said the general, whose French, it turned out, was of the most elementary sort.

"Frost," returned Petrovna, "is of no great service in our counsels. It is enough for him to know on what we have decided."

CHAPTER IV

M. Paul Cadoudal, who was not only portly, but tall, stooped benevolently over Petrovna, with a soft, white hand upon his shoulder, and whispered smilingly in his ear.

"Assuredly," Petrovna answered aloud ; and, turning to the remainder of his guests, begged that he might be excused for a mere instant. Cadoudal, smiling and nodding at each in turn as he went by, walked into the bedroom, whither Petrovna followed him. He closed the door, and, drawing his host toward him by both shoulders, addressed him in a soft whisper.

"Is our young friend," he asked, with a sidelong nod in the direction of the outer room they had just quitted— "is our young friend quite ripe? And is he—now, is he,"—this with a smiling air of most amicable interrogation,—"is he entirely to be trusted?"

"He is a chemist," said Petrovna, answering obliquely, "and for his years a very good one. Poor Laurent seems to have come to grief over your formula. We want somebody to try again, and this I think is our man."

"Exactly," said M. Cadoudal, tapping his friend lightly on the shoulders. "Exactly, my dear Petrovna. But is our young friend entirely with us, and is he entirely to be trusted?"

"Not as yet," Petrovna answered. "We might enlist him for particular work."

"I see," said M. Cadoudal—"I see." He stood for a while in placid consideration of the problem which presented itself to his mind, and then with an air of sudden briskness tapped Petrovna again upon both shoulders, and

said : "Leave him to me, my friend. Leave him to me." They were perfectly cool and collected, and might have been arranging the most ordinary business in the world.

Petrovna laid his hand upon the door, but glanced over his shoulder, as if to ask if any thing remained to be said. Cadoudal signalled him forward with a genial gesture, and the pair returned to their companions. Petrovna moved about to find seats for the whole party. They gathered round the table, and at Cadoudal's invitation Evan sat next to him. The renowned and amiable scholar laid his hand upon his ex-pupil's shoulder, and kept it there.

"Has any body," he asked, "any trustworthy news of Laurent? Do we know with absolute certainty that we have lost him?"

Ducos broke in with an oath.

"I will bet Paris to a toothpick," he said, "that they will never find hair or hide of him. I should have liked a tooth or a toe-nail as a keepsake, but I shall never get it."

"May I enquire why you are quite so certain of that?" asked the benevolent Cadoudal.

"My word!" cried Ducos, "I was in his room less than ten minutes before he blew up. He was already in bed when I called on him, and the stuff was packed under his bed for safety. Had it been properly distributed, he had enough to wreck half Paris."

M. Dusaulx, with both elbows resting on the table, caressed the now empty decanter, and muttered of recklessness and waste.

"A year's work thrown away," he said—"brought to nothing by mere criminal carelessness."

"Our incautious young colleague," said Cadoudal, "has paid his penalty, and we all lament him. For my own part, I do not know where to look for a man of equal courage and capacity."

"Your news," said Petrovna, addressing Ducos, "puts an end to all doubt. My young comrade and I, as chance would have it, were first upon the scene. We were both thrown to the ground by the explosion. I guessed at once it was Laurent."

Cadoudal shot a meaning glance across the table to Petrovna.

"You, my young friend," he cried, turning to Evan at the very instant at which he gave the signal—"you were there? Let us know what happened?"

"Tell the story," said Petrovna; "I am a poor historian."

All heads bent forward, and all eyes fixed themselves upon Evan. The friendly Cadoudal passed his hand to the lad's further shoulder, and turned to him a mildly attentive face.

"There is little enough to tell," said Evan. "The citizen Petrovna and I were walking together in the direction of Batignolles. We had just entered the Rue de Pot d'Etain when an explosion took place at a distance of a hundred and fifty paces. I seemed to be caught in a sudden wind before the noise of the explosion reached me, and I was hurled against a door. Petrovna was thrown upon the pavement. There was a great clash of falling *débris*, and I felt the ground tremble. We gathered ourselves together, and ran to the place. What we saw there you know, I suppose, as well as I do."

The memory of the spectacle he had seen still sickened him, and Cadoudal felt him shudder under his own caressing hand.

"Tell us what you saw?" said Dusaulx. He spoke in a grating voice, and kept his eyes fixed upon the empty decanter, which he was now gently rolling round and round upon its base.

The old repulsion came back upon Evan strongly, but

he told the story, and flattered himself that he told it well. Petrovna had explained his own *sang-froid* only a few hours before on the ground that he was a veteran. Evan's hearers were much older than himself, and more than once gratified vanity gave a fillip to his heart, and kept his gorge from rising.

"There was a woman there," he said, in the course of his narrative, "a handsome woman, who had been blown bodily from one of the houses, and had fallen in the street, on the very bed on which she had been lying. Her feet and her face were bare, but a balk of timber had fallen upon her body and crushed it so flat that the timbers seemed to lie level with the street."

As he narrated this ghastly detail M. Dusaulx ceased to toy with the decanter, and not only raised those veiling eyelids of his, but looked the speaker full in the face.

Evan encountered his glance with a kind of horror. The man's upper lip was drawn away from a set of broken and discolored teeth, and he was gnawing at his finger-nails. His eyes shone with a ferocious joy. Evan stopped dead, and M. Dusaulx's furtive eyes went back to the pattern of the table-cloth.

"These scenes of human misery," said Cadoudal, "are very appalling. I protest that our young friend's graphic narration has afflicted me with a positive sense of sickness. A faint sickness," he said, with one white hand upon his white shirt-front. He looked about him with a slightly distorted face, as if in imagination he saw the scene described.

"It is not easy," said the soldier of fortune, "to make war with rose-water. There is no making of omelettes without breaking of eggs." He spoke the first phrase haltingly, but he knew the French of the proverb, and rattled it off quite glibly.

"Ah, my friend," said Cadoudal, "but we regret an

accident of this nature. We make war, but we do not willingly turn our fire upon our friends. It is for the welfare of these unhappy wretches that we struggle. It is in their interest that we brave all dangers."

At this moment a knock sounded at the door—a knock so loud and imperative that M. Cadoudal started to his feet with trembling hands, and a face as white as chalk. He had risen so suddenly that his portly figure gave a shock to the table, which communicated itself to his opposite neighbors.

"Vieux lache!" Ducos muttered, rubbing at his elbow, while Dusaulx caught the falling decanter.

"No, my friend," Cadoudal retorted; "I am cursed with a nervous temperament, but I am no coward, as you may perhaps find."

He steadied himself by an effort, and it was he who opened the door.

"Our friend Frost," he said, and the friend Frost came in, smoothing a chin beard with one hand, and carrying a glossy hat and a pair of gloves in the other. The newcomer shook hands all round with profound gravity.

"Mr. Petrovna, sir," said Mr. Frost, "our ambitious young friend M. Laurent has at length succeeded in getting himself talked about, but I am afraid he has exhausted his chances of future usefulness."

"Our distinguished young friend Mr. Evan Rhys," said Cadoudal, in very labored English, "relates to us the calamity of this morning, of which he was an eyewitness."

"Mr. Evan Rhys, sir," said the late comer, bowing with an overstudied air, which might have been meant either for burlesque or reality, "I am proud to meet you. You, sir, I believe, are the latest martyr on the roll of freedom."

In spite of himself Evan looked for a sign of mockery in Frost's face. He might almost as well have looked for expression in a blank wall.

"I think it right," said Cadoudal, "to inform our distinguished young friend of the purpose of our gathering."

M. Ducos, in an argot thickly interspersed with oaths, expressed his personal determination that no confidence whatever should be reposed in the stranger until he was thoroughly guaranteed. He declared with emphasis that he was not prepared to see his own head made into a sawdust pie for any body's gratification.

"My friend," said Petrovna, "we are engaged upon particular business, and I must beg that you will not interrupt us."

"Oh!" Ducos grumbled. "If the business is particular, that alters the question. It is no affair of mine."

"Let us get to business," said Cadoudal. "It is extremely important that we should secure a successor to our poor, dear friend Laurent, who is lost to us so far as this world is concerned. For my own part, I regard the presence of our distinguished young friend here this morning as a circumstance entirely providential."

"I object," said M. Ducos, speaking with his inevitable garniture of oaths and curses, "to the introduction of controversial matter." Nobody, he went on to say, had a right in a mixed society to talk about Providence. For his own part, he felt that such an allusion was an insult to his intelligence.

"We will say," said Petrovna, "that the circumstance is fortunate."

"And thus," said Cadoudal, "find refuge from the modern theologies in the arms of a heathen goddess." He looked about him with a bland smile, which did not fade even when he saw that nobody understood him. "I will say, for the satisfaction of our friend Ducos, that I am glad my young friend Evan Rhys is here. When I read that proclamation of freedom for the utterance of which he suffered, I trembled with delight. I proclaimed aloud

to myself in the solitude of my study that the good seed had not been sown in vain."

The unappeasable Ducos asked why all this fuss was being made about the new-comer. Nobody made a fuss about him, who had served the cause faithfully for years.

"Pardon, my good Ducos," said Cadoudal, when the good Ducos had cursed himself to a purple stand-still, and stood banging at the table with a throttled execration half-way between lungs and teeth—"pardon me, my good Ducos, we all value your services, and recognize your enthusiasm, but that is no reason why we should not recognize the possibilities of the service which our young friend can render us. You yourself in your calmer moments will confess that those services may be invaluable."

Dusaulx plucked Ducos by the skirt of his blouse, and whispered in his ear. The blackguard listened sulkily at first, but by and by gave an assenting grin, and thenceforth sat silent.

There were meat and wine and honey in all this for the delight of Evan Rhys's vanity; but the memory of the morning was still strong upon him. All the brave words he had written, and all the swelling thoughts of indignation he had experienced, seemed to him for the time so much cold cloud and vapor. He tried to tell himself that philosophically he was as much convinced as ever of the justice of his opinions, but the shrieks of wounded and terrified women, the agonized cryings of mangled men, and the wail of children were still in his ears. He saw again one horrible human joint, a dismembered limb, bleeding and ghastly, projecting from a heap of broken masonry almost at his feet, and a sense of physical sickness oppressed him. He conquered this, and rose to his feet white and staring.

"Citizens," he said, "I demand to be allowed a word.

I am profoundly flattered by the confidence you place in me, but I cannot accept the post you seem inclined to offer."

Cadoudal laid a hand upon his arm.

"My dear young friend, believe me, we shall ask nothing of you which will revolt your sensibilities. With the permission of our friend Frost I will detail the scheme which he has laid before us, and, having done so, I will ask you if your objection still exists."

Friend Frost looked puzzled for an instant only. When Evan turned to look at him, he had screwed from his face the faintest sign of expression, and sat there, a little withdrawn from the table, blank of meaning, nursing his polished silk hat in both hands between his knees.

"The American society," continued Cadoudal, "which is so ably represented by our friend Frost, reports to us the existence in the United States of a mass of human misery and despair the like of which we cannot show even here in Paris. It reports, further, the existence of regiments of the wealthy. The poorest man, or shall I say the least swollen? of these plutocrats might buy up two or three of the average rich men of our own country. America is the land of monstrosities, but it is nowhere so monstrous as in its contrasts of wealth and poverty."

"Are we in for a sermon, daddy Cadoudal?" Dueos asked, with a grin.

"It is proposed," Cadoudal flowed on, with a passing smile for the interruption—"it is proposed to offer these plutocrats a lesson and a warning. Our distinguished young friend must not look upon us as a pitiless gang of wretches who are eager to shed blood. We do not for the present propose to castigate the vile society we see about us. We intend nothing more than a warning. If the warning should not be accepted, we may be moved to sterner measures."

"There is no making of omelettes without breaking of eggs," said General Vincent. He had practised the phrase already, but had not been absolutely pleased with his own accent. He succeeded so well this time that he leaned back in his chair and folded his arms in a smiling pride.

"Our friend Frost's suggestion," Cadoudal continued, "strikes me, strikes all of us, as being at once practical and humane. Our poor Laurent was engaged in the charging of bombs, and had he been discovered by the police, there is no doubt that he would have been confounded in the common mind with those vulgar criminals whose apparent association with us degrades our reputation."

Evan had half turned his chair, and gave eyes and ears unreservedly to his old master in rhetoric. Ducos took advantage of this circumstance to nudge Dusaulx, his neighbor, in the ribs, and Dusaulx smiled back at him with ugly mirth.

"The purpose," pursued Cadoudal, "for which our lamented Laurent was engaged in the occupation of which I have spoken was simply this: It was intended, when the instruments were ready, to intrust them to a number of safe hands, and to have them exploded at a safe hour, say four o'clock in the morning, when nobody was likely to be injured, in the hall of the American plutocrats. It was intended to select two or three or more in every considerable city, and it was decided that at the hour at which the demonstration was made a manifesto should be issued by the post to this effect: 'To the capitalists of the United States: To-day's demonstration is intended as a warning. The society which proffers the warning is resolved at all costs to put an end to the shameful inequalities in the distribution of wealth which disgrace society, and are provocative of misery and crime. The society does not propose to itself at once to create a dead level of equality. Its object, however, is simple and direct.

It will for the moment permit the retention in the hands of any inordinately wealthy man a sum of one million francs, but it insists inexorably that no larger sum than that should be retained by any individual, and that all and any overplus shall be surrendered to the state for the relief of the poor and needy, the sick and aged, the maimed and halt and blind, and them that have no helper.'"

"Mr. Cadoudal," said Frost, "that recommends itself to my mind as a real gaudy scheme. It is practical, it is humane, it is reasonable."

Frost had never heard of the scheme before, but he fathered it with a perfect gravity.

"If no more than that were meant——" said Evan.

"That," said Petrovna, "is our scheme."

"That," echoed Dusaulx and Ducos together, "is our scheme."

"I shall rest satisfied," said General Vincent, "with no such absurd half measures." If he had expressed himself in English, he might possibly have made some impression, but, as it happened, his halting French was intelligible only to Petrovna, who brought down a grinding heel upon the warrior's toe, and thus cut short his protest.

"Give Petrovna and myself a moment alone with our young friend," said Cadoudal, rising and opening the bedroom door.

Petrovna rose also, and between them Evan marched into the bedroom. The door closed behind the retreating figures, and Mr. Frost, who had been attentively studying the maker's name in his hat, looked up, and, permitting his features to relax into a weary smile, winked slowly at the general, who was nursing a patent leather foot in both hands, and feeling it gingerly.

"Do you suppose, sir," said the general, "that I came here to listen to this infernal milk-and-water nonsense?"

"No, sir," said Frost. "Blood and brandy is your

mixture, general, and you like a stick of dynamite to stir it with. But can't you see that we must have a chemist somehow to manipulate that d——d stuff? I don't lay out to speak much French, and, as a point of fact, I can't express my notions in the language much better than you can; but I can take in what I hear, and I do assure you, general, that I have been amused. Old Cadoudal is a real glory, and I reckon, after all, it doesn't matter much what that young man believes so long as you get your material."

"Oh!" said the general, and said no more.

Messrs. Ducos and Dusaulx had risen from the table, and had drifted together into a corner of the room. They were both convulsed with silent laughter, and each stood, hands on knees, with head projected, and chin thrown upward, purple and gaping with restrained mirth.

"That is our plan, my friend," said Ducos, when he had breath to speak.

"Our friend Cadoudal," responded Dusaulx, "is a master in rhetoric."

Then there fell a silence, and all four sat round the table, awaiting the result of the conference in the bedroom. The general produced a cigarette-case and solemnly handed it round. They all began to smoke, and in about five minutes' time the hum of voices in the adjoining apartment ceased. The noise of the scraping of chairs on the uncarpeted floor announced the breaking up of the conference. Then the door opened, and Evan Rhys appeared, pushed forward gently by the applausive hand of Cadoudal, who patted him again and again on the shoulder. Evan was pale, but his lips were set, and his eyes shone with an unusual lustre. Petrovna brought up the rear, rubbing his hands and smiling.

"The post of danger," said Cadoudal, "is the post of honor. Our young friend has accepted it."

CHAPTER V

Evan was back in his own meagre lodging, which was no better equipped than of old. He sat alone with rounded shoulders over a crackling wood fire, while the spring rain lashed at the window, and the late March wind howled in the chimney. He was sunk deep in thought when, without warning, Petrovna opened the door and entered, shining with rain from head to heel. He carried in one hand a cardboard box, which he placed with extreme delicacy on the unclothed table in the middle of the room.

"Here," he said, "is the sample I promised you. It is very small in quantity, but there is enough of it to enable you to compare Laurent's results with your own."

Evan rose from his seat in rather a listless fashion, and Petrovna saw that he held a letter in one hand. His keen eye even detected the crest of the Duc de Marais Castel stamped in raised crimson and gold on the thick note-paper.

"Do we keep up our aristocratic correspondence still?" he asked, with half a sneer.

"You may read it if you like," said Evan; and, tossing the letter on to the table, he resumed his seat, half turning his back upon his visitor. Petrovna, stretching out one hand to take up the folded sheet, eyed him curiously for a full minute, then, with an enigmatical nod of the head, took up the letter and read it thoughtfully, smiling to himself from time to time. It ran thus:

"My Dear Evan: I have given instructions to Quahar to call upon you at three o'clock to-morrow, Thursday, afternoon, and I shall be obliged if you will be at home to

receive him. He will carry with him certain solid reasons for the arguments I have authorized him to offer, and you will do well to accept them. It is beyond doubt that you are a very clever young man, but it is also beyond doubt that, like other very clever young men who have lived before you, you have to pass through a stage of folly and ferment. I have always liked you, and, in spite of your recent absurdities,—and perhaps, to be quite frank, in part because of them,—I like you still. A milksop is my horror, and I like a young fellow who has a spice of the devil in him, and can make a fool of himself on good occasion. But, my dear Evan, to be quite serious with you, it is time you took counsel with yourself. Let Folly attend her own funeral, and do you listen to experience. If you choose to return to your old footing with me, you shall be welcome. The past month should have taught you something, and I hope with all my heart you have had the good sense to study its lessons."

This good-hearted and friendly epistle bore the duke's usual slapdash, happy-go-lucky signature. Petrovna turned the letter over twice or thrice before he spoke, looking from it to its receiver.

"Well," he said at length, "have you answered this?"

"No," said Evan, "I have not answered it."

His voice and bearing were alike sullen, and seemed to proclaim some inward disturbance.

"The man mentioned here will call to-day," said Petrovna. "I presume you mean to have your answer ready?"

"I suppose so," answered Evan, as sulkily as before.

Petrovna approached him, and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"My young friend——" he began.

"Young friend!" echoed Evan, rising savagely, and

flinging away the hand. "Young friend! Old enemy. I am sick of your young friend. If we talk at all, let us talk as man to man. Drop these airs of patronage."

Petrovna stared for a minute with a readable look of anger in his glance, but his young friend, raging to the other end of the room and back again, missed this. The elder man forced a laugh, which was meant to express a humorous allowance.

"I beg your pardon, my dear Rhys," he said; "I had no notion of offending or of patronizing you. I am old enough to be your father, that is all. Believe me, I grudge you your youth much more than you are likely to envy me my years. Come, come, shake hands."

Evan still flinging up and down the room with hasty and disordered footsteps, and taking no notice of the proffered hand, Petrovna sat down and held his peace for a little while. When he next spoke, it was in a changed voice.

"Do you remember, Evan," he began, with a little tremulous note in his speech, which at once arrested the other's attention—"do you remember Koollala? Do you remember the day when I was lost in the forest? But for you I should have perished miserably. It was no virtue in you to be there by accident, and you did no more for me than any body would have done for any body, and yet I have not forgotten, and shall never forget."

Evan did not refuse the outstretched hand this time. On the contrary, he seized it eagerly, gripped it with warmth, and turned away to hide a flash of moisture in his eyes. Petrovna made a derisive mouth behind him, and quoted in a regretful voice a proverb of his own people: "If not for the whip, then for honey." He spoke in his native tongue, and Evan turned round with an involuntary enquiry.

"What?"

"A verse of an old song," said Petrovna, with a tone of tender melancholy, "nothing more."

Evan resumed his seat, but before he did so he took up the letter, glanced at it in an irresolute sort of way, and dropped it back upon the table. The action looked significant, for the sheet of paper slid slowly from between finger and thumb, as if he parted with it reluctantly.

"Do you care for my advice on this matter?" asked Petrovna, flirting the edge of the thick notepaper with his fore-finger. "It is an old soldier's motto—'Quarter yourself upon the enemy.' Apart from that it will be useful to have it known that you have abandoned the foolish and violent ideas for which you have suffered, and that you are once again under the protection of so conservative a personage as the Duc de Marais Castel."

"I can't do that," said Evan. "Old Frenchy has been very good to me. You remember how he used to feed his pigs at Koollala? I've been thinking, Petrovna. The system's wrong,—the system's wickedly and insanely wrong,—but there are good fellows even among the aristocrats, and Marais Castel is one of them. I can't take his bread and lie to him the while. I did it once, and I lived to be ashamed of it."

"It would be useful," said Petrovna, in a half-resigned voice. "Under such auspices there would be no chance of suspicion. And, don't you see, my dear Rhys," he went on, as if warming to his theme—"don't you see that you are at present a suspect, that you are at any moment liable to a domiciliary visit from the police, that the duke's protection would free you from any such risk at once, that you might move again in the most respectable society, and do your work at home in tenfold security? I do not urge it against your conscience, but think it over, I beg of you, my dear fellow—think it over."

"I have thought," said Evan, "until my head aches, and

my heart is sick. If it were any one else, I might bring myself to do it. I will live in one camp or the other, and I will wear the clothes of the regiment I belong to. I am not ashamed of my uniform, or afraid of the chances of battle."

"Ah, well," sighed Petrovna, this time with an expression of complete surrender, "it is a little bit of a pity from the point of view of an old campaigner like myself; but youth will have its impulses of generosity and honor, and, in short, my dear boy, I could wish we were all like you. And now let us get to business."

He unbuttoned his water-proof overcoat, streaming from which a trail of wet had marked his progress about the room, and, diving into an inner pocket, produced from it a number of small packages, which he laid out upon the table.

"You will know more about this matter than I," he said, "though I also have studied a little chemistry in my day. The ingredients, as you see, are separately harmless. Cadoudal has, I suppose, already supplied you with the formula." Evan nodded gloomily. "This,"—laying a delicate finger on the cardboard box,—"is the final result of poor Laurent's experiments. I shall leave all these in your charge, and as for any implements you may want, you must procure them for yourself. You can rely upon me for funds, and, though I shall ask you not to be extravagant, I shall allow you a complete discretion."

While he spoke, he drew a penknife from his waistcoat pocket, and with great care cut the string which bound the cardboard box. Next he removed the lid, and revealed a packing of cotton-wool. He stripped this away with extreme delicacy and caution, and finally brought to sight a test-tube, some five inches in length, and of the width of a man's little finger. It was corked with a plug of cotton-wool, and about three parts filled with a fine, greenish gray powder.

"Laurent told me," said Petrovna, holding out the box for his companion's inspection, "that he had established different degrees of sensitiveness according to temperature. It is quite safe in a moderately cool place unless disturbed. I fancy," he added contemplatively, "that poor Laurent met his end by a disaster happening to some unguarded trifle such as this. A mouse might roll this from a shelf, and the shock of its explosion would awake any thing else that might lie in the same room with it."

Evan packed up the diabolical little article in its cotton-wool, restored the cardboard cover to its place, and stowed the box away in the safest spot he could think of. He locked away also the other packages Petrovna had brought him. These contained the separate materials for the manufacture to which he had pledged himself, and were, in their separate condition, purely harmless. Petrovna shook hands with him, with a great show of friendly warmth, before leaving, and Evan once more sat down by the fireside to think his own thoughts, and to dream his own dreams. Mr. Quahar was about to visit him, and it was not unnatural that Mr. Quahar should find a way into his reveries. From Mr. Quahar himself to Mr. Quahar's daughter, Effie, was a step neither long nor difficult. At any rate, it was taken in Evan Rhys's fancy, and by and by indeed his whole thoughts were centred in the girl.

When the Comte de Montmeillard left Koollala, he left behind him a humorous Scottish acquaintance who answered to the name of Sandy Quahar. This same man had lent Evan books to satisfy the early craving of his intelligence for knowledge. Quahar hit upon an idea for a speculation in which he thought he saw a great fortune, and with a rather vague hope of success he wrote to the Duc de Marais Castel, setting forth his plans, and offering to become his Excellency's agent in the matter. The genial nobleman had but newly come in for his vast fortune, and was ready

to be generous to any body. He sent Sandy Quahar the money asked for, and, never expecting to hear of it again, appointed Quahar to the solicited agency in a spirit of solemn banter. The Scot, however, accepted the position in perfect good faith, and his Excellency was surprised to discover that he possessed a paying property in Australia, a property which increased so rapidly year by year that at last the very agent grew wealthy on his percentage. Then Sandy Quahar burned to see home again, and longed to settle his bones finally in the old kirkyard in which his fathers lay. Coming home he must needs pay his respects to his patron and employer. He was received with genuine respect and liking, for the duke had not met so many honest men in his time that he could afford to allow such a human curiosity as Quahar to go by him unregarded. Now, for two or three years past,—the Australian property had been prosperously sold,—Quahar had lived in Paris, acting as a sort of factotum to his noble friend and patron.

Evan remembered little Effie as a barelegged and barefooted child, and Effie remembered Evan well enough as a begrimed and freckled urchin. They were both in a way under the protection of the Duc de Marais Castel, and they were thrown a good deal together. That the lad was a hare-brained enthusiast in politics was no bar to his falling passionately in love. Whatever Evan Rhys did, he did with his whole heart and soul.

He sat thinking and thinking until the crackling logs burned to a solid core of heat, and still sat thinking till the glow scarcely shone through gray ashes. Every man is real to himself, and the maddest of madmen thinks his own theories sane. Evan was profoundly convinced of the truth of his own peculiar tenets, but he knew that to adhere to them was to set up an impassable barrier between the girl and himself.

It seems rather a forlorn hope to attempt to enlist sympathy for the sentimental woes of a young gentleman who is resolved on the reformation of the world by the explosion of bombshells. And yet, if the young man be absolutely convinced that duty calls him in that curious direction, and if in order to follow the call of duty he surrenders all that makes life dear and pleasant, he is at least entitled to a wondering pity. The insane wretch who gives battle to the dragons of delirium meets enemies as real as were encountered by the valorous apostle who, after the manner of men, fought with beasts at Ephesus. We can't hold them in equal sympathy, we can't admire blind Fury slinging flame, as we admire calm courage. But the poor deluded fool is, after all, a man, and in his own twisted and darkened mind is willing to suffer to insure the approval of his own conscience.

To the mind of this particular young fanatic there was a charm in the scheme that had been presented to him by M. Cadoudal, and that charm lay in its complete moderation. The longer he looked at it the more admirable it seemed. Just to frighten the wicked rich and the unspeakable aristocrat without effusion of blood, and to bring about an immediate millennium of equality by the destruction of an uncertain quantity of hall furniture, seemed beautifully feasible. He was rising to a sense of enthusiasm about the whole idiotic business when the hour of three sounded from the clock of a neighboring church, and, punctual to a second, Mr. Quahar appeared upon the scene. He was once more accompanied by his daughter, and at the sight of her Evan turned pale, and began to tremble.

The Scotchman's humorous and sagacious face wore an odd look of blended amusement and pity as he shook Evan by the hand.

"I'm doubting, my lad," he said, "that you're not

greatly given to the reading of Holy Writ, but maybe you'll mind the parable of the prodigal son."

"Perfectly well, sir," Evan answered.

"You've been playing the part with consaderable vagor an' the Duc de Marais Castel, who's been just a father to ye, is fulfillin' the other side o' the story. He's wellin' to kell the fatted calf for ye ef ye'll only come home again."

"I have had a letter from him," Evan said in answer. "He told me that you would be here at this time, and asked me to be at home to meet you."

"Well, lad," said Quahar, "ye've had a wee bit experience, and experience, they say, is the mother of wesdom. I'm not expectin' that she's borne ye a vary large family so far, but haven't ye just a leetle bit of a bantlin' to show us?"

"If you mean to ask me," Evan retorted coldly, "whether my recent experience has changed my opinions, I can only answer 'No.'"

"Upon my worrd," cried Quahar, "ye're about the most obstinate young idiot——"

Effie's restraining hand touched his coat-sleeve light as a snow-flake.

"Well, well, well," he cried, "it's no use talkin'." Then, with a sudden determination to fulfil his duty in spite of irritations, he took out his pocket-book and drew from it a note for a thousand francs, which he laid upon the table. "That," he said, "is the offered month's allowance. I shall just leave it here in any case, and if you don't like to accept it, ye can just send it back again. That's no afeer o' mine."

"I cannot possibly accept it," Evan answered. "The conditions which accompany the gift are too hard. I am asked to surrender my convictions."

"D—— your convections," said Quahar, rumpling his

hair with both hands in an agony of irritation. "Yes, yes, yes, Effie, I beg your pardon. But what's to be done with a felly like this, that's hardly out of his swaddling-clothes, and talks about his convections as if he were a bald philosopher of ninety! I tell ye, man, that ye're nothin' less than maddenin'. Ye haven't a right to any convections at your time o' life. It's just your business to be sittin' humble and watchful at the feet of experience. Your convections, as you call them, are so much clotted nonsense. You're clean distempered wi' vanity."

He raised both hands in a gesture almost tragic.

"At least, sir," said Evan, "I prove my sincerity."

"Brag," snarled the old man, turning on him fiercely. "Brag, and nothin' but brag. Ye're just attitudinizing before the distorted merror of your own intelligence. God forgive me for the use o' that last word, but it was the only one that I could find. Ye're thinkin' it looks great and magnanimous to refuse an easy livin', and I can tell ye that ye're just a fool for your pains. Ye take in nobody, y' idiotic young poseur."

"Do you know, sir," Evan answered, "I take some credit at least for keeping my temper."

"Ye deserve none," Quahar shouted. "Ef your prenciples were worth a feg to ye, ye'd fight for them."

"I shall fight, sir," said Evan grimly, "with the right people, at the right place, and at the proper time."

"Well," said the Scot, with that pretence at coolness which is so favorite a device with men who have completely surrendered themselves to anger, "I'll say no more. Ef the openion o' one honest man's any use to ye, ye can have it. Ye're without exception the most rediculously vain young gentleman I've ever met in my life, and your convections, as ye call them, will have done the world some service when they land ye at the gallows."

With this statement, uttered with a philosophic calm

and slowness, he snatched up his hat, banged it savagely twice upon the table, whirled round upon his axis, and shot from the room.

Evan looked after him with a bitter smile. His eye fell upon the bank-note, which still lay upon the table, and he offered it to his remaining visitor.

"Pray oblige me by returning this to your father, Miss Quahar."

"I would rather not do that," she answered. "I have no right to speak, but are you justified in bringing so much grief among your friends? Every-body who knew you looked forward to a career for you. Oh, Mr. Rhys, you must admit that your opinions are extreme. You must know that the great majority of people think them even mad and wicked. I am only a girl, and I know I have no power to persuade you, but would it not be wise to weigh those opinions for a year or two before being quite sure of them? Are you quite sure of being right, when all the world believes you to be wrong?"

"Do you remember my father, Miss Quahar?" he asked. "He was hanged fourteen years ago for the murder of a man whom he killed by accident in self-defence. That man ruined my father, as his father had ruined my grandfather. There was a feud generations long between the two families. The gentleman followed the laborer with curses for a mile or two, and at last would have flogged him like a dog. The law hanged the sufferer, and had nothing but pity for the tyrant. Do you remember my mother? What was her crime? She tried to save her husband, and her reward was penal servitude. Do you remember my baby sister? I have seen you nurse her when you were a child. They tore my mother away from her, and she was left in that lonely shanty. Nobody heard her crying, nobody entered the house. She died there of starvation, the pitiable little mite. I remember these

things, if other people forget them. The law is one monstrous engine of cruelty and oppression. Every hour of every day the rich are at active war against the poor. Society is built on pillage. There is no denying these things. There is no disguising them. To ask me to deny them is like asking me to swear that noon is midnight. I don't choose to sell my conscience for a thousand francs a month. So long as I have head and heart and brains, I will use them to do such work as one man can to break up the reign of selfish wickedness."

"There is trouble everywhere," the girl answered, when at last the impetuous torrent of his speech had ceased. "I'm afraid there will be trouble always, but surely all the rich are not cruel and wicked and selfish. You should know that. Here is one little proof." She laid her hand upon the bank-note.

"A very little proof indeed," said Evan. "Have you any guess at the income of the Duc de Marais Castel? I suppose that what he spends on what he does not need would find bread for a thousand hungry people every day. The poor get a crumb from the rich man's table now and then, but what right has the rich man to his table while millions starve? I will touch none of his money, Miss Quahar. If I were myself a rich man, I should think myself a criminal. I would purge myself of that offence in a day. Wealth is the crime which darkens all the world, and poverty is its shadow."

"I am too young and ignorant," she answered, "to argue these large questions; but I know that there is a great deal to be said on the other side, and I should think it worth while to listen for a time."

Evan was silent. The girl looked about the sordid and comfortless room; the discolored walls, the bare floor, the meagre table and the chair or two, the smouldering ashes on the hearth, seemed all to lay a chilly hand upon her.

Her eyes travelled back to Evan with a kind of pity in their glance. The rain drove noisily against the window, and the March wind groaned and rumbled in the wide chimney. The young fellow in his shabby dressing-gown and shabbier slippers looked altogether forlorn to the girl's eyes.

"My father doubted your sincerity," she said, moved by a sudden touch of kindness. "That was unjust. You have given up a great deal."

"I have given up more than I have a right to say," he answered. "As for this,"—he waved his hands scornfully about, to indicate the poor garniture of the room,—"I care less than nothing. I was bred to hunger and to poverty, and it has cost me very little trouble to learn the lessons of my childhood over again." He paused, and the girl found no answer. She was really very genuinely sorry for him. He seemed to her to be throwing his life away for a chimera, and she not only believed him to be miserably mistaken, but felt in some way that his error was a crime. He had grown to be a handsome fellow, though his face was marred by its settled look of anger and obstinate discontent, and his personal aspect had some weight with her, though she had no suspicion of the fact.

Evan dropped into his old seat, as if he had forgotten her very presence. He threw a last billet of wood on the embers of the fire, and sat for a minute staring at it.

"I don't know," he said at length, "why I shouldn't tell you. You will go away this afternoon, and it is very unlikely that we shall ever meet again."

"I hope we shall," she answered, trying to speak brightly.

"I hope with all my soul we never shall," he answered. "That sounds brutal, doesn't it? I don't mean it so, but your road, Miss Quahar, lies one way, and mine another. We shall live in different camps, and fight on different sides, for this is a matter in which every-body fights—nobody can help fighting." He was silent again for a

second or two, and the girl waited with no guess of what was coming. "That isn't what I had to say," he went on, with his eyes still fixed on the dead fire. "You were saying I had sacrificed something, and perhaps it's just as well that I should tell you of the only sacrifice which has cost me any thing. If I cared to accept the bribe which is offered to me, I might stand a chance, perhaps. I don't know. I might stand a chance of winning the only thing in the world I greatly care for."

"What is that?" she asked simply.

The answer astonished her beyond measure.

"You," said Evan, without lifting up his eyes. "I might perhaps have conquered your affection and esteem, but if I had tried, I should have despised myself. You don't care for me, except in the way of friendship, and never will, and that's a happy thing for both of us. I never meant to tell you, but I see no reason why you shouldn't know."

The girl found not a word in answer to this strange declaration, and before she had recovered the complete mastery of herself a rapid and angry footstep came up the staircase with a sort of vehement stamp, and Quahar burst into the room.

"Ye're here, are ye?" he said. "I'd gone nigh half a mile before I remembered ye. Ye'll do nothing with that sulky heathen. Come away!"

CHAPTER VI

Quahar bustled his daughter down the stairs and into the street, himself far too angry and excited to notice any little peculiarity which might have displayed itself in her manner. For a minute or two there seemed to be nothing in the girl's head but an empty ringing, but as this subsided it shaped itself into words, as if it tolled regretfully : "Poor Evan! poor Evan! poor Evan!" over and over again. His declaration had taken her as much by surprise as even the manner of it had done. She walked as if in a cloud, unconscious of the things about her. Her father had put up a great umbrella, on which the driving rain pattered noisily. When she awoke a little to herself, this thin shelter seemed to shut her out from all the world, except for a mere strip of wet and gleaming pavement.

The two had walked side by side for some minutes before she became aware that her father, with one arm through hers, was talking in a loud and excited tone. She knew then that he had been expressing himself pretty much in the same fashion ever since they had left Evan's room.

"Yon lad," Quahar was saying, "is just the vary deevil for obstenacy and self-openion. He showed it when he was a child. That walk of his from Melbourne to Adelaide—five hundred miles across a country that's four-fifths desert ! What'd bring a baby undertaking a journey like that unless he had the deevil in 'im ? He's been like that ever since. When once he gets a purpose in 'im, y've no more hope of changing him than you would have of converting a brick wall. It's just simple waste of breath

t' argue with him. A strong will's one thing, but that brutal kind of insensate obstenacy is another."

They walked a full mile, and Quahar walked obliquely and talked breathlessly all the way, and all the while in his daughter's brain tolled, "Poor Evan! poor Evan!"

She was glad to escape her father when she reached the house in which they lodged. Quahar made no objection to her leaving him, for both were half drenched with the storm, and a change of raiment was as necessary for him as for her. But long after he had returned to the sitting-room, and had begun to solace himself with a pipe and an unwonted glass of whiskey, his daughter lingered, sunk in her own thoughts, and unregardful of the passage of the hours. She was eighteen years of age, and had never had a love. She had never troubled her head much about young men, but she had always liked Evan better than any body except her father, and until the misguided young man had taken to journalism they had been on terms of great intimacy and friendship. And now Evan, in that extraordinary fashion, had told her he loved her, that she was more to him than any thing else in the world, and in the same breath had bidden her farewell for good and all.

Poor Evan!

She was quite sure that she was not in the least in love with him, but she was very, very sorry that he should waste his life, and throw away all the chances which were spread before him, and sail to his own shipwreck with those foolish windy doctrines to fan him on his course, and the coast of Despair before him. She remembered when she had first come over from Australia how well everybody had spoken of him, and how proud her father's noble patron was of his *protégé*. Now he had ruined himself, and was altogether lonely and abandoned by his own deliberate choice. The ideas for which he had chosen to cast his life away were hopelessly foolish. Even a girl

could see that, she told herself, not suspecting her own clear masculine judgment and the Scottish prudence inherited from her father. And then—and then—and then, after all, there was something admirable in the sacrifice. Had it been made in a cause she could have approved, it would have seemed altogether admirable and splendid. He was a Quixote tilting at windmills, absurd, and even laughable, if it were not for the sadness of the thing. But he was brave and resolute, and scorned discomfort. And then he cared for her more than any thing in the world.

Poor Evan!

She was quite sure that her own heart was untouched except by pity; but the more she thought of him the more the pity grew, until at last it forced a tear or two from her eyes. She felt a gust or two of anger at her father's treatment of the misguided young man. Nobody could be expected to yield his opinions before a contempt so peremptory as he had displayed. Her father was entirely in the right and Evan entirely in the wrong, and yet surely it would have been possible to be more conciliatory. She was more than half resolved to attempt the work of conversion in her own person, but after what had happened that looked impossible. The confession he had made placed a bar between them which looked as if it must hold them asunder always.

The days and the weeks went on. Smiling April followed roaring March, and the trees on the boulevard and about the Champs Élysées began to glitter with the first sign of summer's greenery. She thought a great deal about Evan, and heard a great deal about him. Her father had paid him more than one visit, and spoke of him occasionally with a touch of hope. There might be some lingering remnant of reason in the lad's head, after all, he began to say. He had laid down that revolutionary pen,

it seemed, and had somehow contrived to refit his laboratory. He had gone back to his chemical studies, and that to Quahar's mind was a hopeful augury.

"The lad's not a fool for want of brains," said Quahar. "Outside that idiot craze, he's as bright a lad as ye'll find in a day's march. But he sent back the bank-note I left with him, and he just refuses to argue, or listen to argument. 'I've med up my mind,' says he—the sulky parrot. He'll say that all day ef ye'll lesten t'm."

At least, it was well, so the girl thought, that he should have resumed his studies, and have ceased to write the revolutionary rubbish which had awakened such a clatter among his friends. With this dawn of a possible change in Evan's conduct there came also a first faint dawning of another sort. For if Evan, after all, were going to give up his madness, and to become a respectable member of society, it was not utterly out of possibility that a renewal of his strange declaration might be made. If he really cared for her—if she were really more to him than any thing else in the world! She mused often about these things in the quiet of her own chamber, or when she sat sewing and seemed to listen while her father read aloud some instructing and improving volume of the didactic sort, an exercise of which he was inordinately fond. But it was in her free daily rambles about the bright Paris streets that she had her best time for thinking, and at such times Evan was very often in her mind.

She was not in the least like a French young lady, who cannot move anywhere without an attendant dragon. She, indeed, hardly submitted to the infinitely milder restraint which is imposed upon the English maiden. She had passed her childhood and early girlhood in the colonies, and, whether in the bush or in the city, had been accustomed to roam where she pleased, without let or hindrance. She brought that unconventional habit to Paris

with her, and if sometimes an impertinent boulevardier stared at her, or some foppish jackanapes presumed to fall in step at her elbow, she regarded him no more than the pavement she trod upon, and was not in the remotest degree inclined to be afraid. Some men were built that way—some, but not many. The few who were so built were curiously contemptible, but otherwise without interest of any sort.

So she thought until one bright afternoon in early summer when over the hard, beaten earth of the Elysian Fields of Paris the shadows of the leaves and the netted sunbeams danced and tumbled over each other to a music she could fancy, but could not hear. The air was balmy, the sun was not too warm for smart walking, in which she delighted, the children were playing about with a thousand dancing globes of many colors, the *bonnes*, in Alsatian raiment, strolled with their young charges, or sat knitting and gossiping together—the whole scene, in short, was what it has been on any summer afternoon for many years past, and Effie was enjoying it with all her heart, when she was aware of a dandy shadow by the side of her own. The shadow was that of a person of the male sex who wore a tall hat, raking a little to one side, and a tall collar. The shadow of a hand carried the shadow of a walking-cane, and Effie's nostrils told her that the owner of the shadow smelled of wine. Quite suddenly she became aware of the fact that the person at her side, whoever he might be, had been walking elbow to elbow with her for some considerable number of seconds, and at that discovery she turned abruptly, and walked toward an avenue on the left. As it happened, this avenue was almost deserted, and it is conceivable that the tipsy fop who followed her accepted this fact as a kind of tacit assignation. Before she had taken a dozen paces he was again up to her elbow. The girl had no want of native courage, and of course in broad day-

light, and within sight and hearing of hundreds of people, she was in no danger of real molestation. She stopped as abruptly as she had turned, and, with a glance of majestic scorn, traversed the intruder on her privacy from top to toe. The man was a decent-looking fellow enough had he been sober, and might, indeed, by his aspect have been something very like a gentleman in his ordinary movements. But now, after a too generous breakfast with the fork and eke the bottle, he had grown in his own foolish mind to an inescapable killer of ladies—a dead shot, before whose conquering aim a bird of any plumage was sure to fall. The poor man was so exceedingly tipsy that he accepted the pause and the measured glance of contempt as signs of yielding to his own conquering graces. He said : "Bon jour, charmante," and made as if he would embrace her. Miss Effie easily evaded him, and walked on again, still, unluckily for the tipsy gentleman, in the direction of the less peopled avenue. This was nothing more nor less to his absurd imagination than a renewal of the lady's former acceptance of his advances. So he followed with an amused joy, and actually got an arm round the lady's waist. But at that instant his rakish hat was knocked suddenly from his head, and he himself, being seized by the back of the neck, was spun half a dozen yards away, and was only saved from falling by a friendly tree. He saw before him, between the conquered lady and himself, a young man of fiery aspect, who, to judge by his face and attitude, was eager to renew the assault he had already committed.

"The poor gentleman is tipsy," Effie said ; "don't hurt him, Evan."

The poor gentleman, surveying the situation with a face of foolish amazement, made a wrinkled progress toward his hat. He stooped for it several times, and straightened himself each time laboriously, and, having finally assured

himself of his own centre of gravity, secured his head-gear, brushed the frayed silken nap on his arm, and walked away, humming:

"'Souvent femme varie
Bien sot est qui s'y fie.'"

He was allowed to lurch on his way in peace, for Effie, recognizing Evan, held out her hand to him with a pretty, embarrassed grace, and the young man instantly took it in his own. He had been watching the girl, so it transpired, for half an hour past, and, although this did not transpire, he was profoundly grateful for the opportunity which chance had afforded him. It is one thing to say farewell, and another to experience division and solitude. And Evan's mind had been travelling in the same direction as that which Effie's had taken. He had been wondering if it were not possible, at least in part, to convert her to his views, and in this case, as in millions of others, the wish was father to belief. His own wild theories were to him the very acme of common-sense. Otherwise assuredly he would not have held them. It was not to be supposed that a young woman of Effie's training would be brought to see the absolute moderation of M. Cadoudal's scheme for the employment of the bomb, but it was by no means necessary that she should hear of that scheme.

Of course Effie admired her protector's courage. He had looked very cool and resolute, and ready to face an army of such a kind as the person he had just sent about his business. She was pleased to see that he was much better attired than he had been when they had last encountered, and she argued, as much from his appearance as from the news her father had brought her, that Evan was making a backward step toward civilization, and that the task to which she had set herself would be easier of accomplishment than she had fancied.

"Thank you very much, Evan," she said warmly, with a boyish grip of the hand, and a boyish candor shining in her eyes. "Thank you very much indeed."

"Did the fellow frighten you?" asked Evan, looking vengefully after the zigzagging figure.

"Oh, no," Effie answered, with a little laugh. "I don't think I was frightened, but it was certainly very disagreeable to be embraced by a tipsy stranger in the open air. If you had not come up just in time, it would have been still more unpleasant."

"Was the blackguard rough with you?" Evan enquired. "Did he hurt you?"

"Not in the least," she answered, disposed to make light of the incident, and to discharge it from her memory.

"You will allow me to escort you home," said Evan. "You must not run the risk of further insult."

"There is not the slightest fear of that," she answered merrily. "It is a thing that never happened before, and is not likely, I hope, ever to happen again."

"All the same," Evan insisted, "I shall be glad if you will allow me to see you home."

"Oh, but I'm not going home for an hour or an hour and a half to come," the girl responded. "I have only begun my afternoon's holiday. I walk here alone every day in fine weather."

She stopped suddenly in some confusion. The statement, offered in all innocence, sounded like an assignation.

Evan was also silent and confused, and with excellent reason. At their last meeting he had declared his love and its hopelessness, and now that they were again brought face to face he had nothing to say. There was no renewing the old theme so abruptly broken, and commonplaces looked hateful and intolerable. Effie had the better

courage of the two, as women almost always have under similar conditions.

"You can see me home if you wish," she said, "but I want you to walk with me first, and I want to have a serious talk with you."

"Yes," said Evan rather stupidly.

"Come," said the girl, "you must help me. You must not be lumpy and gloomy and unsympathetic. I want to see if we two young people cannot contrive to understand each other."

Evan met the bright and tender gayety of her manner very grimly.

"There is not much use in trying for that, I am afraid," he said; and the pair walked on in silence under the leafy trees.

The bustle of the crowd in the main avenue and the noise of the romping children grew fainter, and at length only came as a confused murmur to the ear.

"Evan," said the girl suddenly, "you have given me a right to speak to you. I am going to take it."

He turned upon her with a beating heart, and saw that her cheeks were paler than common, and that her lips were trembling ever so little. She met his startled and wondering look bravely, and her clear eyes looked into his with a candid and fearless affection.

"You have not forgotten what you said to me when we last met," she said to him.

"Forgotten!" he echoed, as if the word were the prelude to a great outburst. He said no more, however, but went drooping along, glumly enough, at her side.

"I have not forgotten either," said Effie. She spoke with an ease and tranquillity that considerably astonished herself. "You must let me speak all that is in my mind, dear Evan, for I think I may be able to help you, and do

you good. You told me there was nobody in the world for whom you cared so much as you care for me."

"Nobody," said Evan, sullenly at first, and then with passion: "Nobody!"

"I have thought over all you said," she went on calmly, "and I am glad you like me, because that will help me to have some weight with you. Except my father, I don't like any body in the world as much as I do you."

"I didn't talk of liking," Evan broke out, for the conversation between them was naturally carried on in English, and the difference, which might have been slurred over had they spoken in French, stood out too clearly to escape perception. "I talked of love," he went on desperately, "and I was a fool to have spoken a word. I had no right to breathe a hint to you. The world isn't going to be changed in an hour or a year. Things as they are may last your time. Your life may be bright and happy. Mine can't be, and I must travel my own painful road alone."

"But why," she urged him, "should your road be painful? You have every thing on your side: youth, health, and friends. You are clever. There is nothing to prevent you from making a name and a place for yourself."

"I shall do that," he answered. "But it will not be a name you would care to hear, or a place that you would choose to see me in."

His words chilled her more than she cared to own, but she made a pretence of valuing them lightly.

"Come, come, Evan, this is mere melodrama. Let us be serious. Let us talk as friends talk. Let us have no secrets between us, and no misunderstandings."

"I speak of love," said Evan, pressing both clenched hands against his heart with undemonstrative inward rage, "and you speak of friendship. I was a fool to speak at all, for I know that there is no possibility of any thing

between us. You will go on in your own way, and I shall go on in mine. You will be taught by those about you to execrate my very name, and every day that passes over us will lead us further apart from each other."

"I am sure," she answered steadily, "that I shall never execrate your name whatever happens, for I am sure that whatever you do will be done because you think you see your duty in it. That is my main reason for liking you, and admiring you."

"There have been some women," he returned, "who have fought in such a cause as that in which I am enlisted. Not many. And they have not been of your type."

"What is the matter with my type, Evan?" she asked him patiently enough.

"I find no fault with the type," he answered, with a passing touch of gayety and affection; "but you have none of the enthusiasm which impels a woman to lay down her life for an ideal."

"You mean," she answered, lifting her straight, sensible eyebrows, "that I am not flighty, and that I have a little saving common-sense. You see, Evan, I am very young, and, in comparison with you, I am very ignorant; but you remember what old John Selden said: 'Nobody is the wiser for his learning. Wit and wisdom are born with a man.' I suppose it's the same with a woman. The world has always seemed to me such a great, heavy, sluggish thing, so impossible for any one man to move. There are hundreds of things to regret in it, hundreds of things to mend, but each one of us can only do his duty. The great big ball goes on rolling, you know, and we can neither stop it nor turn it aside. If you will let me speak quite plainly to you, Evan——"

"Certainly," he said. He was going to demolish her whole argument by and by, and could afford to be gracious for a moment.

"Well, then," she went on, "I think the rock on which all you fine theorists come to grief is egotism, pure and simple. You think your ideas are of value because you hold them. You are here on this monstrous planet for an hour or two. You can't even lift yourself for a second at a time if you tug your hardest, and you think you can lift the whole world. You are in too much of a hurry. The social rosebud doesn't open fast enough for you, and you want to pull it open, as if that was the way to grow a flower. I am not trying to hurt you, Evan. I am only trying to tell you exactly what I think. The root of all your trouble, and the root of the trouble of all the people who think as you do, is an impatient vanity."

"And so," said Evan sardonically, "we are all to sit down in humility and patience, and to be ground body and soul by this diabolical social mill. We are to see Lazarus at the door of Dives, without even the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table, or so much as a friendly dog to lick his sores. And we are not to gird at Dives. We are not to tell Dives that he is a sordid and selfish beast, or even to notice that he sickens with his own excess of pleasure."

"Why not," she answered—"why not tell the honest truth in all places? You are clothed in no purple, Evan, but you wear fine linen. I don't think that you fare sumptuously every day, but you have enough to eat, and a roof to cover you. Sometimes when I see the very poor I am ashamed to be well dressed and well fed and happy, and to know that I have done nothing to deserve it all. But these things are not ordered by you and by me. We can't help them. We can't change them. There have always been rich and poor."

"There's the cloven hoof of the true conservative," said Evan. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen. If the fault on our side is

vanity and impatience, the fault on yours is indolence and selfishness, and I would rather overestimate my power a little, and be in a little bit of a hurry, than do nothing at all because no man can do much."

"Let us sit down," she said; for in the heat of speech, Evan had begun to walk at a pace which gave the girl some trouble to keep up with him. There was a shaded seat near at hand, and he obeyed her wish.

A slow and stately step drew near, but neither of them regarded it until M. Paul Cadoudal paused before them, with a big umbrella over his shoulder, and a dove-colored hat surmounting his benevolent head of silvery hair. M. Paul Cadoudal had recognized Evan a full five minutes back, and had meant to have speech with him. He himself was a bachelor, and had a natural and legitimate dread of the womenfolk of all his co-conspirators.

"Bon jour," said monsieur, with his most amiable and winning smile. "Your pardon, mademoiselle." It was impossible to look at Effie and to imagine for a moment that she was such a chance companion as a young man of rackety taste might find in the Elysian Fields at that hour. He raised his hat, and stood before her with his tall bald forehead and his genial smile, a venerable and beautiful figure. "My young friend may perhaps do me the honor to introduce me."

Evan performed the ceremony of introduction, and M. Cadoudal shook hands with the young lady with a paternal, and, indeed, almost a caressing, air.

"You will come to me," he said, addressing Evan suavely, "at your earliest possible convenience. I have business of the utmost importance to yourself, and the sooner I can explain it to you the better."

Every-body knew M. Paul Cadoudal, and Effie, young as she was, and a foreigner, was familiar with his distinguished name. She was honestly pleased that Evan

should have so eminent a friend. M. Cadoudal was, to be sure, a man of advanced opinions, but he was no extremist, and his influence was bound to be exerted on the right side.

"I will not detain you for a moment," she said therefore; "I shall make my way straight home."

She shook hands with Evan, made a pretty little half-rustic obeisance to the philosopher, and walked briskly in the direction of the Rue de Rivoli.

"A pretty girl," said M. Cadoudal. "An old acquaintance?"

"I have known her," said Evan, "almost ever since I could remember. We were playmates in our childhood in Australia."

"Tenez," responded M. Cadoudal. "I want you to come to my house, my young friend. I have news to give you."

He offered no further explanation, but, encountering near the Rond Point a man who was carrying a great load of papers to some outlying kiosk, he bought from him an evening journal, and, folding back the page, laid a gloved finger on the head-line of a column: "Anarchist Outrage in the Rue Timbale!"

CHAPTER VII

M. Cadoudal resided in the Avenue de la Grande Armée. He owned a well-to-do looking house, which stood a little back from the street, in the shade of its own trees, and was approached through a trim little bit of garden. Mignonette, the Frenchman's darling, circled all the little oval flower-beds, and bloomed odorously in shallow green boxes on the window-sills. The front door was set in trellis-work, and the climbing roses were already rich in leaf, if sparse in blossom. The whole place looked like the abode of innocence, and M. Cadoudal in his broad-brimmed, dove-colored soft felt hat, with his clean-shaven, benevolent countenance and his flow of silver hair, was as appropriate an inhabitant of such a domicile as might be found in all Paris.

At the back of the house there was a garden, very much larger than that which bloomed in front of it. This second garden was surrounded by a high wall, pierced in one place by a green-painted, weather-blistered door, which fastened by a clumsy lock into a rusty staple. M. Cadoudal, smoking a cigarette, and sauntering slowly up and down the path which led directly from the French windows of his own study to the door in the garden wall, took occasion to turn the key in the shrieking lock and to look up and down the lonely little back road which lay beyond. Evan took no note of the circumstance at the moment, but M. Cadoudal left the door unfastened and resumed his walk.

From the moment at which he had laid his fore-finger on that significant head-line Evan's guide and philosopher had said nothing. He had folded the evening journal into a convenient size, had conveyed it to his breast-pocket,

and had walked on with an air of beatific calm. As he strolled up and down the garden with Evan at his side he drew out the paper and read aloud from it the story of that day's mischief. Evan learned that in broad daylight, though in a deserted thoroughfare, a bomb had been exploded in a third-rate café, that a waiter had been frightfully injured, and that one or two guests who were in the enjoyment of a *petit verre* after their mid-day meal had incurred minor damages.

"These people," said Cadoudal, "are curiously unrestrained and motiveless. What could have induced any body to attack a place of that sort?" His voice rose as he put the question, and ended in a crack. "What is to be gained by it? I ask you, my young friend, what is to be gained by it? 'The garçon of the café,'" he read, "'is not expected to survive. The bomb exploded immediately beneath the unfortunate man, and his injuries are of such a nature as to leave room for surprise that he was not killed upon the spot.' Now, my young friend," continued M. Cadoudal, "is there not a most lamentable waste of enterprise, of energy, of ingenuity, of courage, or whatever goes to make a revolutionary movement admirable? All thrown away. Absolutely thrown away."

He talked in a loud and excited voice as he strode up and down the garden path.

"I am in sympathy," he said, "and I do not care who knows it,—I proclaim it from the house-tops,—I am in sympathy with the down-trodden and oppressed, and I would blow up an emperor or a czar with all the pleasure in life; but I protest, all the same, against these meaningless and purposeless outrages, which make the cause of liberty accursed in the eyes of the world at large. The ruffian who threw that bomb," he declared, flourishing his right arm in the air, "has put back the clock of progress by a year."

He was extremely oratorical and vehement, and said much more to the same purpose, and when the flood of his eloquence had subsided, he led the way into his study, closing the French doors behind him.

"My neighbor on this side," he said, with a backward nod of the head, "is a somewhat curious person. He had the window open just now, and had his ear laid to it. I saw him, the *scélérat*," he said, laughing with an innocent heartiness, "and I thought it worth while to treat him to a spoonful of that infant's meat on which our good republicans feed us. All the same," he added, with recovered gravity, "I am inclined to think the event of this afternoon lamentable. And, talking of meat and spoons, my young friend, let us see when we may expect dinner."

He touched a gong which lay near his hand, and a fresh-colored, neatly attired waiting-maid came into the room.

"Now, here is a charming young woman," said Cadoudal, rubbing his white hands, and beaming on the pretty little domestic, who blushed and smiled, and bridled in a pleased confusion. "I am an amateur in youth and beauty. My compliments to the cook, Lucile, and when dinner is ready for me, I am ready for dinner. I need not remind you. You see my guest. An extra cover."

The pretty girl disappeared, and the distinguished philosopher chatted with a delicate animation, touching on many points of interest for the hour, and ornamenting all with a stroke of wit or good-nature or apt quotation. The dining-room was a snug little chamber, with climbing plants about the window, and a bird in a gilded cage, which, late as the hour was, began to sing with great ardor as the master of the house entered the apartment.

"You will meet," said M. Cadoudal, when the pretty domestic had served the soup and retired—"you will meet this evening a colleague whom I think you have not

hitherto encountered. Do you know our friend Lebon? No? I thought not. Jacques Lebon, a useful man, by trade a brass-founder. I must make him known to you. It is a little interesting that our friend Lebon should have been led to embrace the cause mainly from the evil treatment he has received at the hands of an old friend of yours."

"An old friend of mine, sir?"

"Your friend the Duc de Marais Castel," responded Cadoudal. "This man Lebon has a mother—no unusual circumstance, but one to which he appears to attach a superstitious value. He is of the same age as the duke, and his mother acted as the young aristocrat's wet nurse. In the mind of our friend Lebon that has established a claim against your late patron. Your late patron, it seems, declines to recognize the claim, or forgets it, or neglects it, and behold! the poor Lebon is driven into our brotherhood. It is not a logical movement, as you observe. The man obeys a passionate instinct, which is something of a pity, for what I would seek most of all in the futherance of our aims is the spirit of dispassionate justice. Not to gratify this, that, or the other private spite, but because it is necessary for the salvation of the body politic, we resolve upon a certain course of action. You will see our friend Lebon," he concluded, "and I dare say you will understand from him why I desire that you should be known to each other."

Beyond this M. Cadoudal gave his young friend no reason for having sought his companionship. He seemed, indeed, so far as Evan could judge, desirous not to be questioned, and the young man, seeing this, forbore to trouble him. He was somewhat puzzled by his host's speech and manner, and had some difficulty in deciding upon the nature of the philosopher's sentiments. The young man liked to classify people, and he did not find it

easy to classify M. Cadoudal, who contrived to be all manner of people in a single half hour, to be delightfully sympathetic, to be icily cynical, to be serious and flippant in a breath, and to cover all with the same innocent, bland, and engaging smile.

But when dinner had been over for an hour, and the May dusk had already fallen on the pleasant garden and the broad avenue, guests began to drop in, as if M. Cadoudal were holding a holiday reception. Petrovna came, attired in evening dress, having an engagement later on, as he protested, at the opera. M. Dusaulx appeared in speckless black and white as heretofore, guarding his shifty eye from the remotest contact with his neighbors'. Mr. Frost came later on, full of Irish-American urbanities, but obviously a good deal stricken by the news of the afternoon, and drawing people into corners to consult them as to their views.

"Naow," said Mr. Frost, with an evidently genuine solicitude, "what I want to know is what effect this ridicalous folly is going to produce on the public mind. I am known, sir," he explained to Evan, "in most Europeian capitals as an emissary of the Cave of Freedom, and it is likely enough to be supposed that my society has had something to do with this blahsted nonsense. Now, sir, my society does not encourage this particular kind of stoopidity. Because I happen to be a representative public man I have no desire to be lynched in the streets of Paris. These ridicalous manifestations should be put down, and put down, sir, with a strong hand. We have no right to waste our forces, and when our forces air expended, they should be expended in the right direction. And I reckon, sir, that it is the dooty of the conclave to apprise every one of its members of what is intended to be done before any overt act is committed. I reprehend the remissness of the committee, sir," said Mr. Frost with emphasis. "I

feel it keenly. They have no right to expose a prominent citizen of another nation to danger."

In fluent but tremulous Anglo-Hibernian-Americanese Mr. Frost discoursed on this topic to all who could listen to him, and to those who could not understand his native tongue he explained his woes in halting French, until at last he made a sort of halo of solitude about himself, and the mere indication of a movement on his part sufficed to clear any corner of the room. Finally M. Dusaulx was the only person whom he could induce to listen to him, and that gentleman afforded him the coldest comfort.

"If the mob," said M. Dusaulx, "should be moved in the direction you indicate, they would probably tear you into little pieces. I have never seen a man torn into little pieces."

He said this with such a dreadful air of disappointed relish that Frost shivered as if an icicle had been passed between his collar and his spine. For many years past the anarchic creed had afforded Frost a laborless means of livelihood, but he had never really liked it. It was delicious to live without work, but it was hard that a paradise of harmless dreams should be broken in upon by realities like these.

By the time at which the dark of the spring night had fairly fallen there were some ten or a dozen respectably attired people gathered in M. Cadoudal's study ; and, the evening air being soft and balmy, the tall and wide windows were left fully open, so that a broad beam of light ran for some distance down the garden path, and showed the springtide blossoms which grew on either side of it. The hour of nine struck resonantly from the mantel-piece, and the last note had barely vibrated into silence when a step was heard in the garden, and a dark, formless figure gradually resolved itself into the aspect of M. Ducos. M. Ducos was in his customary attire of unblacked boots, blue

blouse, and flat workman's cap. He was, as usual, dirty and unshaven, and he had, as usual, been drinking. He saluted every-body with an air of coarse familiarity, and slapped the philosopher on the shoulder, calling him "Mon bon," "Mon brave," and "Mon ami," with a tipsified effusion. The master of the house submitted to these endearments with an excellent grace, and handed on the new-comer to a fellow-guest with perfect urbanity. Then came separately three men who to look at were members of the decent working class. One turned out to be a compositor, and another a shoemaker. The third was the man of whom Cadoudal had already spoken, Lebon, the brass-founder, the declared enemy of the Duc de Marais Castel.

This Lebon was one of the unfortunates of nature who, whether the world go well or ill with them, find it insufferably weary. There was neither discontent nor anger in the expression of his face, but he looked as if he could cry at any minute, saving his manhood. And along with this look of tearful lassitude he had something of the facial aspect of a man who has just tasted a nauseous medicine. Fatigue and a resigned disgust were upon him, but when Evan, interested in the man because of his association with his own old patron, fell into conversation with him, the man made no complaint and offered no grievance against the world. His face alone and his presence in that society seemed to offer a sufficient protest.

Cadoudal, having received his last guest, closed the French windows, and drew the blinds, but before he did so Evan observed that he exchanged a whisper with a person who remained on guard in the outside darkness.

"The event," said the rhetorician, "which has induced me to take the liberty of calling you together this evening is without doubt familiar to us all in the fullest details the press of the city can afford. I do not know how far I shall be followed by the sympathy and approval of my

colleagues when I declare that, in my opinion, no more foolish, futile, and mischievous act could have been committed by the bitterest enemy of our cause. It is not my business to inflict an oration upon you, but I wish to offer for your approval a simple and direct suggestion. I learn from the journal I hold in my hand,"—he drew it from his pocket as he spoke,—"that the explosive employed was incased in bronze, and that the bronze was cast in a circular form. That, my comrades, is enough to mark the missile. I shall propose that every person to whose care an instrument has been confided shall produce it at our next meeting, in order that we may know by whom this meaningless outrage was perpetrated. In the course of the campaign which is forced upon us by the existing conditions of society we are certain of making many enemies. We are assured beforehand of being misunderstood and vilified, but we are not content to be branded as purposeless madmen, or to make our own cause hideous in the popular mind by acts which can do nothing to advance our hopes."

"Regardez un peu, mon bon," said the drunken Ducos, lurching upward from his seat. "Je suis Collectiviste, moi."

M. Cadoudal attempted to soothe the interrupter, but had no success in that direction.

"Needless," said the alcoholized Ducos, "to make any perquisition into my affairs. The act was mine, and in it I find my glory. I shall acknowledge it before the accursed tribunals of my unhappy country as freely as I proclaim it here. Je suis Collectiviste. Vois-tu?"

With this proclamation of his faith he tumbled back into his chair, and looked about him with a sleepy defiance in his little blood-shot eyes.

"For my own part," said M. Cadoudal, "I profoundly regret the action of my friend Ducos, and I venture to ask

him on what ground of service or expediency to the cause he supposes himself to excuse it."

The drunken Ducos demanded from his seat to be answered. Was a Frenchman a slave? Was a man who had eaten a dinner or two at a restaurant to be persecuted for his bill? If he had mistaken the garçon for the patron, that was his affair. He regretted his error more than any one else was likely to do. For the rest, he was a man, and a freeman, Collectiviste to be sure, but a man all the same and answerable to nobody—ni Dieu ni maître.

Having offered this proclamation with great warmth and much exuberance of action, he fell asleep.

"I fail to see," said M. Cadoudal, his customary smile a little distorted—"I fail to see in what manner we are to deal with our friend Ducos."

"I," said Petrovna, springing to his feet, "rise to propose that the satisfaction of any private grudge by means provided by this society be henceforth punishable by death."

"I support that proposal," said M. Dusaulx, rising in his turn. "It is shameful that good sport be spoiled at the whim of a drunken fool."

Carried, *nemeni contradicente.*

Practically, the business for which the meeting had been called together seemed ended with the statement Ducos had volunteered. The opinion was universal: this drunken ruffian had brought obloquy upon the cause for naught.

Mr. Frost pointed out in a speech which was translated by Petrovna that every effort the society made exposed every member of the society to the gravest danger. The prudent Frost argued that no more danger could be incurred by the most damaging blow they could strike at the institutions they desired to abolish than was brought upon them by this snoring drunkard's madness. Frost

invited the company to strike and strike strongly in the right direction, but he appealed to their sense of justice and fairness. He pointed out, not without delicacy, that before the blow was struck it was their duty to a foreign aid and representative like himself to give him warning, so that he might be clear of the ground before the explosion occurred, and thus be free to continue and extend his own career of usefulness.

For the present at least it was decided that work should cease, and that every possible precaution should be taken until such time as the vigilance of the police should be set to sleep again. The ruffian origin of the society's alarms snored like a hog throughout the latter part of the discussion, but being awakened, and being reminded that his fellow-guests were leaving, insisted on departing by the front door. "Parceque je suis Collectiviste, vois-tu, et connais ni Dieu ni maître." He attached himself to his comrade Dusaulx, and sang a ribald version of the "Marseillaise," until the cool air of the outer night brought an exposition of sleep upon him, and he was left alone.

Evan, of his own will, had taken a seat near to the despondent Lebon. He was inclined to be more than a little sick of the whole business. To make stern war against authority was one thing, and to prepare weapons of destruction to place in the hands of irresponsible and bloodthirsty idiots was another. He ventured to say as much to Lebon as they came upon the street together.

"You are my collaborator, n'est pas?" said Lebon. "It is cruel to be so used. I am sick of it altogether. Do you mark me, comrade? There is as much to regret in the doings of our own body as in the working of the world outside. Every thing is cruel, every thing is wrong. We shall never mend it. But, thank God, there is a grave in front of every-body."

"Our venerable comrade," said Evan, walking by the

man's side, "tells me you have a quarrel with an old friend of mine." From end to end the road, so far as it could be seen, was silent and deserted, and the two, though they spoke by instinct in a low and guarded fashion, were in no danger of being observed or overheard.

"I know whom you mean," Lebon answered. "You and I have not met before, but I have learned all about you. Look you," he added, abruptly laying a heavy hand upon Evan's shoulder. "These aristocrats are the devil for ingratitude and heartlessness. Are you walking my way?"

"All ways are the same to me for an hour or two," Evan answered.

"If you will come to my house," said the brass-founder, "I will show you the woman who for two years was a mother to your friend. He and I were born in the same month, and nursed at the same breast. He is an aristocrat and I am an *ouvrier*, but if he were a man, there ought to have been something like a bond between us. You would have thought he would have cared for the old mother. You would think that any thing but a beast would remember the breasts that suckled him."

Evan's political beliefs, profound and irrevocable as they were, left room in him for a saving grain of honesty with respect to the characters of people who took the other side.

"That is the last thing," he said, "I should ever have expected to hear about him."

"It is true, all the same," Lebon retorted. "A year ago I broke an arm. We had had sickness in the house, and were desperately poor already. Then came this disaster, and but for the help of the neighbors there would have been no bread to eat. Then said my mother, 'I will write to my child. I have left him alone these forty years, but he cannot have forgotten.' She wrote once, twice, and thrice, and he sent no answer. I went myself to that great

house of his on the Quai d'Orsai, and his lackeys,—there were two of them,—drove me from the door. That day, my comrade, I turned against God ! "

Evan was always prepared to join in a general denunciation of the wicked aristocracy, but it was barely just to allow the man whose generosity for fourteen years had clothed and fed him to be assailed on such a ground as this.

"I know the man well," he answered, "and what you tell me is impossible."

"It happened," said the brass-founder curtly.

"Then," said Evan, "it happened without his knowledge. The letters have been thrown aside by his secretary, and have never reached him. He was a man of the people once, and he has changed and fallen away from all his promises. But for generosity he has no equal. If all men of his order were like him, it would be a pity, for they would be beloved by the common people everywhere, and the reign of inequality might be eternal."

"I bother my head very little about those things," said the workman, in his moaning voice. "This I know : that we drank the same milk from the same breast, and he left me to misery. He had not even a word to throw at the poor old mother. It is abominable, my friend. It is only an animal of an aristocrat who could behave so."

"You're wrong," said Evan. "I've known him almost ever since I could remember. It is no part of my business to fight his battles. He is one of the few with whom the faults of his class are misfortunes, but his virtues are his own. It is easy to be generous when generosity costs nothing, but at least his purse is always open."

"It was closed to me," said the brass-founder. "It was closed to his own foster-mother. I am what I am because of him. I have turned against God, and I am an enemy to mankind ! "

Personally, Evan thought he was not likely to be formidable, though in the hands of the society he became a force by virtue of his trade.

"I will tell you," said Evan, "what I will do. I will write to him myself before I sleep, and I will guarantee that the old mother shall want no more."

"What!" cried the man, turning on him with distended eyes. "Appeal again to that abominable! Never, never in life." Evan shrugged his shoulders in silence, but resolved to write, all the same. So long as people of wealth existed, it was but just that they should be exploited for the benefit of their poorer brethren. "If you will do me the favor to step out this way for a few hundred yards, you shall see my house and the mother. It makes me angry," the man continued, "but she will be glad of a word with any body who has known him. Women are queer creatures, and she will listen to no word against him, though he has deserted her. She is proud of having suckled an aristocrat, and she loves him as if her own body had borne him. You see, my friend, she is a woman of the people, ignorant, and used to being trodden upon."

They had turned abruptly to one side, and now paused among a crowd of mean tenements, in front of one which stood a little back from its neighbors, in a small and frowsy field. In a smaller building than the house itself, which stood on one side to the rear, a furnace was glowing, and the figure of a lad lounging against the door-jamb in shirt-sleeves and apron was silhouetted against the glare.

"This is my house," said the workman. "If you will give yourself the trouble to enter, I can offer you a glass of little blue and a crust. The old mother will be glad of a word about him."

As he was speaking there was heard the sound of tramping of horses and rolling of wheels, and up came a mag-

nificent equipage. Evan stared in amazement, and hailed the coachman, who brought the horses to a halt at his feet.

"Hullo, Victoire! What on earth brings you in this part of the world?"

"Bon soir, M. Rhys," said the coachman, touching the brim of his hat with a white-gloved fore-finger. "His Excellency is within doors."

"Here?" said Evan, indicating the house.

"Here, monsieur," the coachman responded.

The brass-founder stared like a man who had received a blow.

"What is the meaning of this?" he said. "Let us go in."

CHAPTER VIII

Lebon entered the house, pushing Evan gently before him. The outer door opened immediately upon the living-room, which was scrupulously clean and orderly. A cheap lamp burned upon the table in the centre, and beside the table sat a very clean and alert old lady in the attire of fifty years ago. She had a tight, sparse band of silver hair on either side of her venerable forehead, which was ridged with wrinkles like a ploughed field, and her bright and friendly old eyes shone with all the brilliance of youth, though her fallen cheeks were of parchment, and her lips drawn close to the toothless gums. She had a downy little grey mustache and beetling eyebrows, and she was smiling with a look of contentment and happiness so complete that Evan's heart was quite melted at the first sight of her. By her side, and holding one withered old hand in his own, sat the Duc de Marais Castel. There was a very fine and delicate odor in the air, and it was not difficult to guess that this emanated from a tall, slender flask, the label on which was obscured by the gathered dust of many years. His Excellency and his foster-mother had apparently been drinking to each other's health in the rare vintage which scented so divinely, for two glasses which stood upon the snow-white table-cloth still held traces of wine. In one corner of the room was a hamper, the lid of which, being thrown open, revealed the necks of a number of bottles and a quantity of packages, of various forms and sizes, done up neatly in gray paper.

Lebon paused, arrested, on the threshold, and looked at the scene before him open-mouthed.

"Aha!" said the old lady, "you are home at last, my

son. This is my Henri, mon cher." The duke rose and turned to his foster-brother, stretching out a hand to him. The action was so full of friendliness, so graceful, and apparently so spontaneous that the founder of bombs, not without a later sense of amazement, put out his own horned fist to meet it, and the two stood for an instant hand in hand looking at each other. The nobleman was evidently attired for some great function, for he wore a broad ribbon of green silk across his shirt-front, and the left lapel of his coat sparkled with orders. The workman was in his every-day attire of cap and blouse, and the contrast between the two was striking. "Eh!" said the old woman. "How long is it since you two stood in the same room together?"

Lebon dropped the duke's hand, and, drawing up a chair, which grated noisily on the unclothed brick floor, sat down.

"We should be better acquainted," said the duke. "It is more than twenty years since I saw you last, and, my faith, my friend, your mother's milk seems to have agreed with you less than it has with me."

"Ah," said the old lady, wagging her head with supreme satisfaction, "I told you he would come, if he did but know where to find us. He has learned only to-night by chance, and has come at once to see me." The good soul was inflated with pride and affection unutterable, but Lebon's mask of feeble despair had hardened into a scowl, and he glared at the visitor as if he would willingly have killed him where he sat.

The duke had recognized Evan at his entrance by a mere smile, and the faintest elevation of the eyebrows.

"How comes it," he asked, "that I never heard from you of your acquaintance here? This," he added, laying an affectionate hand on the crisp white cap of the crisp old lady beside him, "is my foster-mother."

"We have not met before," said Evan, speaking stiffly and with reluctance. He felt as if there were a burden of ingratitude upon him, and as if he somehow misused the duke's past generosity in refusing his present help. His intellect rose in protest against that assumption, but the feeling was there, and was not to be denied.

"My old nurse," said the duke caressingly, "will procure for us two other glasses, and we will drink to this encounter."

The old lady arose, full of sedate pride, and walked to a cupboard, from which she returned with a cheap and common tumbler in either hand. She set them on the table, and the duke emptied the bottle, distributing its contents into the four glasses. Lebon sat glowering at him as if fascinated, but when his Excellency proffered him one of the tumblers, he rose abruptly and clutched it with a gesture so savage as to spill one-half of its contents.

"Confusion to all aristocrats!" he said, and with this sentiment he tossed off what remained of the wine, and flung the glass through the open door-way. It broke upon the rough pavement outside with a crash, and the high-bred horses, nervous in proportion to the fineness of their breeding, set off with a rush, and were not controlled until they had traversed a hundred yards or so.

"Shame on you!" clamored Mme. Lebon. "Is that how you treat your foster-brother after a score of years?"

"If my foster-brother had come when he was wanted," the man answered, breathing short and hard, like one who had just finished a race—"if my foster-brother had come when he was wanted, I might have had another welcome for him. We have been poor, M. le Duc, but we have our own pride. We humbled ourselves to write to you three times, and your servants turned me from your door."

"My dear friend," cried the duke cordially, "I am sorry for it,—I am profoundly sorry,—but I received none

of your letters, and until now I never heard of your having called upon me. Had I known of it, you should have been made welcome. I am a forgetful fellow, and with me out of sight was always out of mind. When I was young and irresponsible, I had, as you may remember, some share in the opinions of my young friend here. I paid for it, as you may be able to recall, by an enforced visit to New Caledonia. When I came back, after the lapse of half a dozen years, a good many of my old friends had disappeared, and you among them. Come, my good friend, is it worth while to be angry?"

He held out his hand again, but this time Lebon was not to be taken by surprise. He resolutely refused to surrender his own, and plunged both clenched fists into the pockets of his trousers. The old woman ran round the table and tugged at one arm, but he resisted her in a surly quiet.

"If you choose to be unreasonable," said the amiable nobleman, with imperturbable good-humor, "I cannot help it. At least you and I, vieille nourrice, are going to be once more the best of friends."

"Ah, but yes," said the little old woman, clinging to him with both shaking wrinkled hands. "It was never in your heart to leave us. We have had hard times, but God has been good, and has brought you back at last."

"Eh, bien, ma mère," said the duke, stooping to kiss her wrinkled forehead. "I am sorry for the hard times, but they shall come no more. Good-night, Henri."

But Henri was not to be conquered. His mother cried shame upon him, but he kept his sulky demeanor to the last.

"Are you staying here, Evan?" the duke asked, "or can I drop you at your lodgings. I drive that way."

"I thank you very much, sir," Evan answered gravely, "but I am staying here for a little while."

"Good-night," said the duke again, and so stepped into his carriage, and was driven away.

"Oh, Henri, Henri," said the old woman, shaking a reproachful head at her son, "how have you behaved? Thou didst not know of this," and she took from her dress pocket under her tidy little white apron a battered old porte-monnaie which she held up tremulously before him. "Is he generous?" she asked, with the tears trickling in her black eyes. "Is he good? Has he a heart in a thousand?" Her fingers shook so much that she could hardly unfasten the hasp of the purse, but by and by she succeeded, and drew from it in a weeping triumph a bank-note for five hundred francs. She held out the note in one hand and the purse in the other, the tears running down her face meanwhile. She kissed the note over and over again, and at last dropped upon her knees, calling upon the Virgin and all the saints to bless her benefactor. She was of Provence, as her marked accent, the deep jet of her eyes, and the tawny brown of her skin declared, and she surrendered herself to this passion of gratitude and emotion as willingly as a savage or a child. She would not rest satisfied until Lebon had examined the note and had pronounced it to be real.

"Real!" she cried then, bouncing to her feet, and snatching the note from him in a sudden rage of another sort. "Is he a forger of bank-notes, then, the proudest gentleman in France? And the richest and the handsomest, and the boy I nursed at my bosom? And one would think that it made you unhappy to know that your old mother was free of care for the rest of her life."

"No, no," said he, "I am glad of that—right glad of that for thy sake."

"This is my son, young man," said the old lady, addressing Evan for the first time. "For months past he has done nothing but rave against all aristocrats. He has

cursed his own foster-brother a thousand times, and even now he hasn't a word of thanks for his kindness. I tell him it is a good thing for a man to remember his place, and not to speak evil of dignities. In my young days poor people respected their masters, and those in authority over them, but now with half the poor it is neither God nor master. They are atheists, and they hate the people whose bread they eat."

The excellent Rhenish, whose potency the old lady probably undervalued, had loosened her tongue, and she galloped away at a great rate, discoursing on the superiority of former days over these republican times, and exalting the splendors of the old Comtesse de Montmeillard. Lebon arose at last with a somewhat better grace than he had hitherto shown, and kissed her on the cheek.

"I am glad thou art happy, my mother," he said, with a rather uncertain voice. "Get thee to bed and dream of thy two sons, and think they both love thee as well as one of them does."

Then, with a nod of invitation to Evan, he left the house and made his way to the small foundry at the rear. Here he dismissed his apprentice, who seemed to have no other occupation than that of feeding the furnace fire.

"When my mother has gone to bed, we can go back to the house," he said, "and have our crust and our glass of wine in peace. Meantime I may as well see if my mould is ready for to-night's casting. No, nor will be," he cried angrily; "the stupid lout has moistened it again. He will be the death of me one of these days. Look you," he called to Evan. "You see this great iron frame, and this other which fits it with a hinge." He closed the ponderous lid carefully. "You lock it with a bolt," he explained in his own slow and cumbrous way, suiting the action to the word in illustration. "Your molten metal comes in through here, and then if your sand is wet no anarchist ever made

a bomb to do half the mischief. I have stood at the other end of a workshop and seen a man blown to pieces. I was twenty paces away, and a piece of iron as big as my fist passed me by a hand's breadth and killed the man behind me. I helped to pick up the pieces," he went on. "It was an easy death, I should think. Eh? You would think it an easy death, wouldn't you? I have wondered often. I have had half a mind to try it, many a time, if it had not been for the old mother. She is a good creature, the old mother. She scolds sometimes, as you heard just now, but what does a man care about a woman's tongue?" He drew away the bolt, and raised the ponderous lid again, his speech rumbling and grumbling meanwhile like flowing water in a cavern. "Mon Dieu, but you are right about our aristocrat. C'est un beau gars, ça. It was no fault of his. I begin to think I have been a fool in cursing him. Why should I make shells for bombs to blow up the *bourgeoisie?* It is a dangerous game, that, my lad." He turned his lugubrious countenance on Evan, and nodded his head in a series of little jerks, as if to say: Consider that, and mark well its source. "I begin to think I have been a fool in more ways than one. Anyhow, the old mother's cabbages are fat now. What have I to growl about? These plots are nothing to me."

The workshop was illuminated only by the dim glow of the furnace fire, and by a stump of candle which adhered by its own grease to a disk of tin, to which was attached a long handle of the same metal. The man, looking Evan very steadily in the face, took up this odd candlestick, and then set out across the shop. He made his way to one corner, where a number of massive odds and ends of metal lay in a heap against the wall. These he removed one by one, groping for them alternately with either hand, and meanwhile keeping his eyes fixed on Evan's face. This persistent regard drew the young man across the room to

watch more closely, and, if he could, to divine the meaning of his companion's movements.

When all the incumbrances were removed from the corner, Lebon took up a loose fragment of board, and revealed a hole in the floor. He had scarce done this when he sprang to his feet, and barred both the door and the heavy wooden shutter of the single window.

"I was mad to forget that," he muttered, as he went back to his corner. He knelt down again and drew from the recess a small box, such as is commonly used by moulders in his trade. He opened this, and showed it to Evan. Its purpose was obvious at a glance. It could be used for the casting of a hand grenade a little larger than an orange. Lebon carried it to the end of the bench beneath the window, and there, reversing it, quietly beat out the firm sand, which fell in pieces like an extremely friable sandstone.

"No more of that," he said almost joyously. A third time he went to his corner, and, once more kneeling there, brought out a series of hollow copper balls, which jingled musically together as he handled them. When he had groped in every corner of the hiding-place and had brought out all its contents, he replaced the board, and once more concealed the aperture with the massive odds and ends of metal.

Evan watched him without a word, thinking how natural the man's apostasy was in the circumstances, and conjecturing the simple working of his mind. Lebon gathered into the skirt of his blouse all the clinking, hollow balls, a dozen, perhaps, in number, and, folding the linen into a knot in one hand, seized an iron hook in the other, and drew away the cover of his melting-pot. The metal, with a coaly scum upon its surface, gleamed dusky red, and into it, one by one, the apostate from anarchy dropped all his implements of destruction. Then he covered the

melting-pot again, sat down upon the bench, and filled his pipe.

"If they want more bombs," he said placidly, "they can go to the devil for them. The old mother is happy. Why should I put my neck under the knife?"

"Your principles do not appear to have been too deeply rooted," said Evan.

"Why," returned Lebon, "I hate a man who does me a bad turn, but I can't quarrel with a man who does me a good one."

"You had no quarrel with society?" asked Evan.

"Not I."

"Only with the Duc de Marais Castel?"

"Nobody else in the world," Lebon replied, pulling at his pipe. "You see, I thought these fellows were all alike, and now I find that, after all, there's a bit of human feeling. As for that game,"—jerking a thumb in the direction of the melting-pot,—"I never liked it, when I came to think of it, and now it's done with; I shall risk my head no more."

"Suppose the society should refuse to allow you to resign your post," asked Evan, "what are you going to do?"

"Nomme d'une pipe!" Lebon cried, with a shrug of his heavy shoulders. "I am a free man, I suppose. We live in a free country. A man can do as he pleases."

"I do not think that you will find it so," Evan said, with great seriousness. He had thought this question over in his own case pretty closely, and he saw that, so long as his companions demanded his adhesion, there was no way of escape from the pledges given. He had had no wish to escape, but he had looked the whole matter full in the face and recognized his own position.

Lebon was silent until he had finished his pipe, when he knocked out its ashes on his heel and put it in his pocket.

"And besides all that," he said, pursuing the current of

his own thoughts, whatever they may have been—"and besides all that, I shall never feel comfortable about this day's work. That blackguard Ducos would never have found the means if it hadn't been for you and me. Did I tell you that I saw the fellow?"

"What fellow?"

"The waiter at the Gigot de Mouton, in the Rue Timbale. Did I tell you I saw him after the explosion?"

"No," said Evan with a shudder, which he could not have repressed to save his life.

"It was ten minutes or a quarter of an hour after the bomb had been thrown," said Lebon. "I heard what had happened just as I was passing the corner of the street. There was a tremendous crowd there, and the police were wheeling the poor devil through it. A woman came out with a clean sheet, and 'For the sake of Heaven and all the saints,' said she, 'cover him up.' They put the sheet over him, and it mopped the blood up like a sponge in a second. There were patches as big as both my hands in half a dozen places before they wheeled him on again."

The man, with perfectly unconscious brutality of phrase, went into detail as to the condition of this injured wretch's body before it was hidden from sight. He had seen, and he told what he had seen with a ghastly simplicity and directness. Men of his breeding do not paraphrase; they use plain words.

The scene was vividly and horribly present to the younger man's imagination. He put both hands before his face and groaned aloud.

"Eh, bien!" said the convert. "That is what you and I have been doing."

"I wash my hands," said Evan, "of this hideous assassination."

"It will be a long time," Lebon retorted, "before the poor devil will wash his hands of your powder. They

were both black with it. They had no shape in them. They looked like over-roasted pork."

Evan, with a cry in which horror and pity and remorse were blended, rushed toward the door, hurled the wooden bar aside, and staggered into the open air. Lebon called after him, but he did not even hear.

The early summer night was beautifully tranquil. The air was sweet, as one finds it sometimes in great cities, as if a broad, slow gust of country odor had been drawn into the streets.

In the wide avenue there were sober revellers seated in front of small cafés, over their cigarettes and pipes, their coffee and sugared water, and more than once as the young man walked, hard-eyed and pale of cheek, along the causeway his ear caught a word or two which told him with unmistakable clearness what was the one universal topic of the hour. It chilled him to the heart to think that, had the members of any one group known him for what he was, they would have rent him limb from limb. He was no coward, and it was no fear that chilled him. It was rather the monition of a certain still small voice within himself which told him that the rage and loathing of the mob would have been natural, just. All his mind clamored in rebellion against the verdict of his heart, but the verdict repeated itself inexorably.

There was no making war with rose-water. There was no making of omelettes without breaking of eggs. This affair of the waiter was a small disaster in a great campaign. One innocent non-combatant had suffered. How many innocent non-combatants—how many millions—had suffered in the shameless and shameful wars which had been thrust upon the world by its tyrants, its conquerors, its brilliant statesmen, and the abandoned women of the courts!

It was war against war that he had declared in his own

heart,—war against all forms of tyranny and oppression,—and victory meant the end of unnecessary human pain.

He had found these reflections very tonic and inspiring before now, but under the stars and along the quiet streets he was haunted by the figure of a man on a wheeled stretcher, and his brain made a picture in which every abominable detail Lebon had given him was as clearly seen as if the injured man had been there bodily before him in broad daylight.

CHAPTER IX

In these fast-rolling times no event seems capable of holding the public attention even for the nine days of the proverb. The waiter at the café in the Rue Timbale died in hospital, an inquest was held upon him, a verdict found, the man was buried, and there an end. There was not a capital city or a village in the whole civilized world in which the unfortunate creature's name had not been bruited to and fro. But in half a week it needed an effort in most men's minds to recognize it.

But, though the world forgot, as the world with all its manifold forms of business and interest is compelled to forget, Evan Rhys remembered. Lebon's crude and gross picture was before him night and day. He sat idle in his laboratory, or roamed listlessly about the streets, compelled to think, and striving hard against the compulsion. He received one or two secret messages from Petrovna. The work was at a stand-still. Why were not more bombs provided? He had no answer for the messenger, and did no work.

It was full summer, and the brawling, sparkling human tide flowed gayly as ever along the boulevards. The tragedy of six weeks ago was buried deep, sunk in completest oblivion; but Evan Rhys's chemical labors were discontinued, and the young man had mighty trouble in convincing himself that his principles were unchanged, and that the doctrines on which he had acted were just as irrefutable as before.

He was sitting, unkempt and disorderly, in his own rooms one broiling day, when Petrovna made a call upon

him. The Russian was portentously solemn. Evan expected him to break out in reproach, but Petrovna had no word to say in that direction. There was a great cause, he announced, and a great opportunity. A meeting was to be held that night at the house of Cadoudal, and certain arrangements were to be decided upon which would be of vital result to the future of the society, perhaps of vital effect on the future of the world.

Evan's presence was indispensable, yet somehow Evan was languid. The mysterious, important scheme would have fired him with a loose enthusiasm two months ago and would have set his pulses thrilling with curiosity. Petrovna noted the change in him clearly enough, but for his own reasons he made no comment on it.

"Be punctual to the hour," he said. "Our business will commence at ten o'clock, and you will meet there the whole executive of Paris."

"Very well," said Evan indifferently, "I will be there."

He would not confess it even to himself, but if he could have escaped from the position in which he had placed himself, he would have given his right hand to do it. The arguments were all just as sound as ever, the world was abominably mismanaged and full of suffering. The *bourgeoisie* kotowed to the nobles and trod upon the poor. There was no justice in human law, no fair distribution of human burdens; it was all wrong together—incurably wrong, unless the anarchic reign of terror could bring about a change. He remembered all the old familiar arguments, the old plausible, lucid instances, which had once convinced him, and they carried conviction no more.

All the same, he was summoned to witness the development of the new movement about which Petrovna had striven to be so impressive, and he would go. He must go. There was no help for it.

He kept his own room until the fall of evening, and

then dressed, and dined at the sordid little restaurant in his own neighborhood. He sat among the people in the pathway, smoking his cigarette and sipping his coffee after dinner, until it should be time to set out. The evening was exquisitely cool and pleasant after the heat of the day, and the simple, innocent, harmless folk among whom he sat enjoyed themselves in a simple, innocent, and harmless mirth. Respectable, broadclothed people who kept shop all day were there with mothers of families, fat or meagre,—for the Frenchwoman of the lower middle classes knows no mean,—and spruce clerks were polite to their fiancées under the watchful mother's eye ; and out in the roadway a number of children danced in the dust to the strains of a steam-organ in a big beer-hall on the other side of the street.

It was all commonplace, pure commonplace, and at another hour he might have been scornful of it. He seemed, in spite of himself, to find little reconciling touches of humanity everywhere about the crowd. Theoretically, these amiable people were, of course, the enemies of the world, sunk sluggishly in their own infinitesimal affairs, and presenting a log-like resistance to all thoughts of social advancement. But somehow the theory did not work just then. His heart ached bitterly, and, vacating his place among them, he paid his little reckoning, and walked away.

The twilight sank slowly into gloom, and the lights of the cafés and the street lamps grew brighter. The gay chattering crowds multiplied and grew denser as he strolled along, and he, with his saturnine face and downcast heart, shouldering his way among the merry-makers, seemed to himself as if he were the only man with a care in the world.

He lounged along with no other aim than to kill time, and made an aimless point in arriving at Cadoudal's door with precise punctuality. When he was ushered into the

study, it seemed to him as if business had already begun, for the master of the house occupied a chair at the head of a long table, and guests to the number of a score or thereabouts were drawn up about it. Lebon, who had apparently entered only an instant before him, was closing the shutter of the French window, and Dusaulx had risen to offer him a chair.

"Now," said the president on Evan's arrival, "we may enter upon our business. I will not waste time in unnecessary words. There is no man here who is not mindful of his obligations. There is no man here who is not aware, completely aware, of the inevitable result which must follow disobedience or recalcitrance. The inner council has decided upon a most momentous and important line of action. What that line of action is it will be my duty to explain when we have by the drawing of lots decided upon the two members of this assembly who will be intrusted to pursue it. I call upon M. Percheron to produce the printed list, and to read it over. Those present will kindly answer to their names."

Whoever else felt the solemnity and importance of the occasion, it was very evident it was impressed very deeply on the mind of M. Paul Cadoudal. He was very pale, and he was forced to press his shapely white hands upon the table to prevent them from trembling. When he tried to assume his accustomed benevolent smile on Evan's entrance, he looked like a man who was going to the scaffold, and who tried to endure that ordeal bravely.

M. Percheron, a gaunt man with a squint, rose, and produced from a breast-pocket a narrow ribbon, like a strip of scarlet paper. He read from this strip of crimson color a list of names, and at every name a voice answered. Many of the voices were harsh and acrid, as if they came from throats constricted by strong emotion. Ducos offered his response in a braggadocial bellow.

When all the names were called and answered to, the president continued.

"The list," he said, "will now be cut into strips of equal size. Those strips will be folded, will be placed together, and shaken in a hat, and one name will be drawn. Will our friend Rhys act as croupier?"

Evan made no objection, but by way of sole sign of assent threw his hat upon the table. It was of a soft black felt, and he had sat nursing it, and crumpling it to a ball upon his knees.

"That will do very well," said Cadoudal.

Meanwhile the gaunt man with the squint had taken a pair of scissors from the table, and now proceeded with grave deliberation to slice each name separately from the printed list. Every-body watched him as if fascinated. When all the strips were cut, he folded each one twice, until it assumed the form of a little scarlet square of about an inch in size. When all were folded, he beckoned for the hat. Evan passed it to him, and M. Percheron took it by the rim between thumb and finger. He laid the hat upon the table before him, manipulated it with both hands for a second, and then dropped in lightly the crimson squares. The silence was so intense that every-body could hear the faint rustle they made in falling. Next, M. Percheron took the brim of the hat in both hands, and, drawing its sides closely together, swung it rapidly to and fro. He had risen from his seat to do this, and now, with a bow to the president, he laid the fateful hat upon the table.

"Will our young friend Rhys oblige us," asked Cadoudal, "by withdrawing one name, and one name only?"

Evan looked round the table and saw all eyes bent on him. His hands underneath the table quivered like aspen leaves, and he hesitated for a second to control them by a resolute will. His throat was harsh and dry, as if he were choked with ground glass.

"Oblige us, if you please," said Cadoudal, in a voice which told that he was trembling from head to foot like a shaken spring.

Evan obeyed, and the president's quivering hand was stretched out to accept the scrap of paper. He unfolded it with obvious difficulty and read the name.

"Henri Lebon."

Lebon had sat as fascinated as the rest, with his usual half-weeping look fixed upon his face. But at the mention of his name he gave a sudden bound in his seat, and his jaw dropped piteously. Other men shook themselves, and passed their hands over their eyes, sighing as if awakened from a sleep.

"That," said the president, reaching out his hand and appropriating the hat, "is number one. We have still to trust to destiny for another choice."

He carefully extracted all the remaining fragments of paper from the hat, and, crushing them in his hand, rose from his seat and carefully burned them in the fire grate, while the gaunt Percheron produced another strip and read out the names it bore for verification and answer as before. The whole scene re-enacted itself. Again the list was shown and the slips were folded, and again the hat was placed before Evan. Every-body was as intensely eager and interested as before except the miserable Lebon, who sat at the foot of the table with a mask of misery as immobile as stone. There were only four or five in the whole assembly who knew precisely what hung upon the drawing of the names, but every man there knew full well that the game was played for death. No such solemnity as this would have marked a light occasion.

Evan Rhys drew for the second time, and drew with a firm hand. Cadoudal's fingers shook so, and so fumbled over their simple task, that Petrovna, who sat near him, relieved him of it. He laid the paper on the table, and

pushed it gently over toward Evan. The hapless young man read his own name there in staring black letters—Evan Rhys. The very letters seemed to have some fantastic meaning he had never seen before. He was not shocked or terrified or moved in any way, he thought: and he speculated in an indifferent fashion as to whether a man suddenly sentenced to death would feel the same indifference.

A voice which sounded as if it were at a great distance spoke to him, and a hand touched him on the shoulder.

"You had better drink this," said Petrovna, and he seemed to awake to the consciousness of lights and faces he had for the moment forgotten. He drank from the proffered glass, and tasted nothing. Petrovna had given him neat brandy.

"Yes," he said, looking about him with an awakening air. "Evan Rhys. Yes, that's all right."

His hat was lying before him empty, and there was a pungent smell of burning paper in the air. He looked at the faces about him, and the strain of expectation and terror was removed from all. Lebon still sat like a tearful gargoyle, and Evan wondered within himself: "Did I take it worse than that fellow? Nobody gave him any thing to drink."

"I should like to smoke a cigarette," he said aloud. "May I be permitted?"

"Assuredly," returned Cadoudal, who had recovered something of his usual bearing.

Evan found himself thinking how terribly afraid Cadoudal was lest his own name should be drawn. As for himself, he knew that he was about to be told off for some dark service, and he rather wondered what the bland, fat benevolent would have done with such a task.

"It now becomes my duty," said the president, rising to his feet, "to explain the meaning of the ballot which

has just been held, and to lay before those brethren upon whom the choice of destiny has fallen as precise an account as I can offer of the tasks they are called upon to perform. In order that I may make the purpose of the inner conclave perfectly clear, I shall offer a few preliminary observations.

"The difficulties we encounter in the advocacy of our ideas are various and many. Some of them at the beginning,—I speak for myself, at least, and of my own experience,—some of them at the beginning were of so unexpected a nature as to be actually startling. It was inevitable that we should find enemies among the upholders of caste, and among the swollen votaries of Mammon. We knew that the so-called religious societies would oppose us in the mass, and would denounce us as creatures void of all human feeling. But we did not at first perceive that many of our subtlest and most powerful enemies are to be found among those that not only profess but exhibit in their daily lives a pronounced affection and solicitude for the poor. But on reflection it will be seen that it is impossible to secure universal acceptance for our doctrines while the suffering poor in whose cause we labor are hoodwinked by the benevolence of a few of those whom they have a right to regard as their hereditary oppressors. It must be obvious to the poorest understanding that whatever tends to keep the peoples of the world in a state of contented subjection to the existing condition of things is a bar to the progress of those great and lofty ideals, to the realization of which we look forward to with so majestic a hope, and so tremulous an anxiety. It is only by compression that you can secure force for an explosion, and if all tyrants had been as tyrannous as the worst of their class, the explosion toward which we look, and for which we are each in his degree preparing, would have occurred centuries ago. It is the benevolent despot, the man of power who uses his

power benevolently, who is the bitterest and the most accursed among the foes of humanity.

"Our most dangerous foes, then, among the aristocracy are those who lull themselves into the dream that the whole of their class may one day be converted to a generosity superior to their own, and who proclaim that the duties of capital toward poverty outweigh whatever privilege may belong to wealth. There are men, my friends, who would bail the Atlantic Ocean with a tailor's thimble. They would soothe the fiery sores of Vesuvius with a porous plaster. In the words of Shakspere, they would cool the sun by fanning his face with a peacock's feather. It is these weak and futile enthusiasts who are the most dangerous enemies of our ideals, and they are, therefore, the men whom we are most urgently called upon by every voice, alike of expediency and duty, to remove.

"Were we, my friends, the heartless and bloodthirsty wretches whom the world imagines, we might rush to the task which awaits us with feelings far other than those which now animate our breasts. But we are men, and men of sensibility; men with eyes to see the intolerable misery of this widespread world; men whose ears are filled with the echo of a groan which has not ceased since power first begat Property on Falsehood; men with hearts to answer to the call of a mangled and bleeding humanity; men with the clear-sighted courage which dares to look into the very soul of truth; men who recognize that the old ways of reform are hopeless, and that nothing can be achieved until the whole framework of tyranny is broken down, and the cataclysmic forces of a world in wild revolt have crushed and rent, and burned to ashes, the last vestige of existing law.

"Acting, then, on these convictions, which are common to us all, which have been arrived at not in a moment of heat or passion, but as the result of long and calm enquiry, we

dedicate our two brethren on whom to-night's lot has fallen to a duty which, though stern and dreadful, is ratified by the voice of our own individual and collective conscience."

Here M. Cadoudal brought his speech to an end, and resumed his seat. Two envelopes, each with a crimson seal impressed with his own private crest, lay before him, face downward, on the table. He shifted these nervously, shuffling one above the other for a little while, as his listeners took breath. M. Cadoudal had not achieved his position, and held it in the face of Paris and the world for thirty years, for nothing. Declamatory as his periods were in form, they were not declaimed—they dropped from his lips in a quiet, natural music, and the tone of heart-wrung regret which ran through all the sweet-voiced passion of his speech haunted the ear and set the heart tingling. It was a common saying that while Cadoudal spoke his listeners believed any thing. Reason freed itself from the enchantment of that exquisite manner, that touching voice, that noble and unconscious gesture ; but reason had no seat at his table that evening, and the honeyed poison poured by a fanatic for the lips of fools and madmen was swallowed as if it had been the very wine of wisdom.

Two hearers sat indifferent—the men who knew themselves appointed to the shedding of blood. The others expressed themselves in a deep murmur, for open applause was dangerous.

Petrovna, half rising, leaned across the table and possessed himself of the two envelopes which were shuffling to and fro in the hands of the late orator. They were marked simply with the figures 1 and 2. Without a word he handed the latter to Evan Rhys, and sent the other skimming along to the foot of the table, where Dusaulx laid a hand upon it, and pushed it toward Lebon.

Evan broke the seal, drew out a plain card, and read these words :

"Son Excellence le Duc de Kingsclear, l'hôtel de son Excellence le Duc de Marais Castel."

The matter seemed to concern him very little, but he slipped the card into the ticket pocket of his coat, and placed with it the crumpled crimson slip which bore his own name, and indicated his destiny. Then he looked up, and encountered the glance of Lebon. He too had opened his envelope, and had read the inscription on his card. He wore the look of a man who is falling into a fit of epilepsy. His eyes rolled, his features writhed and jerked, his whole body was moved by involuntary spasms. There was a thick foam upon his lips. Twice he tried to speak, but his lips gave forth nothing but an inarticulate murmur.

"Mon Dieu !" he cried at last. "Qu'est que c'est ça ? Mon frère ? Jamais ! Jamais ! Jamais ! C'est infame ! C'est horrible ! C'est impossible !"

Petrovna rose quietly, and patted the table twice or thrice to secure the miserable man's attention.

"My friend," he said, "it is necessary to say but a word. The penalty for disobedience is—— Shall I speak the word ?"

"Oh," said Lebon, with a shrug of infinite misery and resignation, "je connais bien le mot !"

CHAPTER X

Four weeks elapsed.

For the first fortnight Evan was stunned by a sense of the misfortune which had fallen upon him. He had promised himself many things, and seen himself a thousand times in fancy posed as a hero and a martyr. But he had never pictured himself as an assassin.

He began to take an extraordinary interest in the doings of the English Duke of Kingsclear, who at this time, indeed, made a great figure in Paris, and was to be read about in the journals of almost every issue. The biographers of the distinguished English stranger left the enquirer but little to seek with regard to his public career. He was that Marquess of Avelchurch who, fourteen years ago, after a four-years' tour around the world, had entered the House of Commons, and had introduced a half score of bills for the amelioration of the condition of the working-man—bills so radical and sweeping in their tendency that even a House inspired by the free voice of enlarged constituencies had not dared to pass them without conservative amendments. It was that Marquess of Avelchurch who, at enormous cost, had built a phalanstery on his Devonshire estate, and had gathered there the discharged criminals of the realm in the hope of reforming them, and winning them back to an honest life, until at last they had burned his costly palace over their own heads, and gone devious about their separate wicked ways. It was that Marquess of Avelchurch who was known as chairman to countless societies for the reformation of the criminal grown and netted; for the dredging of criminality's sea for criminal

spawn ; for the sterilization of the criminal and pauper microbe, here, there, and everywhere. A man complained of by the lively Gallic journalist as exhibiting in perfection la morgue Anglaise, and yet admirable and admired for a constant heroism of effort in the cause of the poor—known to have spent his huge fortune like water on schemes for their benefit ; a teetotaller, a vegetarian, and anti-tobacconist, the foremost warrior against the opium traffic, a spiritualist, a faddist, a cold enthusiast, a most noble-minded and unutterably wearisome crank and bore. One of God's angels, none the less, spending himself day and night without reserve in the service of his fellow-creatures ; worshipped and flouted, scoffed at and pityingly endured.

This Marquess of Avelchurch had, in fulness of time, come to be Duke of Kingsclear, and now bored the gilded chamber instead of the popular. Every-body admired and esteemed him for his moral quality, but all men shunned the prim arrogance of his spoken platitudes. He could empty a festive chamber as effectively as a smoking chimney in a March wind. He gave the world an unstinted, aching love, and got back from it for main payment a tolerant laughter !

It was this Marquess of Avelchurch, Evan remembered, who had once attempted to rescue him from savagery and pauperism, and from whom he had run away, only to see the black flag floating over the walls of Adelaide jail at the close of a memorable journey.

It was this Marquess of Avelchurch whom he was deputed, on the peril of his own life, to assassinate.

He made one step in that direction. He went to Petrovna, and asked him for the shell of a bomb. He filled that shell with his own diabolical compound, made after the formula of the benevolent and eloquent Cadoudal, and put the bomb away, ready for use, in a little black hand-bag, in which it lay safely packed in cotton-wool. Many

a time he was tempted as he sat alone to cast the bomb upon the floor of his own chamber, between his own feet, and so bring an ignominious and frustrated life to a close.

But the four weeks had gone by, and there came an ominous warning. The ruffianly Ducos swaggered into his room one day without a preliminary knock, stared with blear eye at the occupant, slammed his hand on the table noisily between them, and went out again without a word. Two minutes later Evan found on the spot at which the blackguard had struck that resounding blow upon the table a scrap of paper, on which in a rough and unformed hand these words were traced :

"L'ouvrage ou la mort."

Evan was almost at the end of his financial tether, but he went out steadily that evening, and bought a revolver, which he loaded in every chamber. From that night forward the weapon was his constant companion. He learned its mechanism. He unloaded it, and went through a form of practice at a postage stamp gummed on the blank wall of his room.

So another week went on.

At the end of it a letter came through the post unsigned, undated. It was written in English, and read :

"You have till to-morrow midnight. Not an hour after."

"Very well," said Evan on reading it. "So much the better for me. I would rather die fighting than eat poison of my own making in this sewer of despairing cowardice."

He walked the streets till midnight like a phantom. He had not tasted food for days. For the last three days he had had no money for food, and had felt no need of it. When at night he returned to his chambers, from which every thing salable had been stripped, he cast himself upon his bare pallet, and, worn out by the emotion of many days and nights, slept like an innocent child.

When he awoke, the dawn was rising over the great city. All the smoke with which the manifold fires of that busy little insect man darken the fair face of heaven had fallen under the quiet dews, or had been blown away by tranquil winds which drew softly from the blue Mediterranean to the gray Channel waters. As he looked through his window the lower reaches of the sky were of the faintest and most tender apple green. This merged softly into pure amber. The amber resolved itself into rose, so delicate and ethereal that it looked like the element of a dream, and, in turn, the rose color grew fainter and fainter, until it was drowned in the blue of the zenith. Infinitely restful. Infinitely mournful. Infinitely calm. The young man set his elbow on the window-sill, and looked up at it all, seated in a ragged cane chair, and wondered, and, in such a blind fashion as was possible for him, worshipped. Right away overhead in the deep heart of the deepest blue of the zenith one belated star throbbed and tingled, and went out, extinguished in the smaller but nearer glory of the rising sun. Why was it that at that instant the one caress his mother had given him in all his bitter and neglected infancy should recur to his remembrance? It brought the tears tingling to his eyes with a sense of barely endurable physical pain.

The light broadened, and the forehead of the day, clearing the lower roof-tops of the city, struck into his lofty chamber through a golden mist, and smeared its shabby wall-paper with amber and gold and topaz, and all such sublimated tones of yellow as the level sun can yield.

The clock of a neighboring church tolled four. He had yet twenty hours in which to gain life as the wage of murder. It was by no will of his own that he made his final resolution. He walked into the room in which he had lived and worked for the past few months, and in the drawer of his unclothed table, which stood in the middle of

it, he found a pen, a bottle of cheap ink, a sheet of writing-paper, and an envelope.

He sat down, and, without being conscious of any inward impulse, he wrote this renunciation of all the errors of his life :

" *To his Grace the Duke of Kingsclear :*

" Sir : Your friend the Duc de Marais Castel will give to you any information you may require concerning the writer of this letter. Before you receive it I shall have ceased to live.

" It is not my purpose to reveal to you the names of my associates, but I am a member of a society which, as it seems to me, for curiously inadequate reasons, has resolved upon your death. Five weeks ago I was chosen by ballot to be your assassin, and I have now received warning that unless my own mission is completed before midnight of this date I shall myself be subjected to the penalty of death. When my body is found, as it will be in all probability within the course of the next few hours, this communication will be conveyed to you by the police, who will take all the precautions necessary to safeguard you during the remainder of your stay in Paris.

" I am, sir,

" Your devoted servant,

" Evan Rhys."

He enclosed this brief epistle, and addressed it to the Duke of Kingsclear " Aux Soins de Son Excellence le Duc de Marais Castel, Quai d'Orsai." Then, being heavy with hunger and with many wakeful nights, he threw himself anew upon his pallet, and slept again until high noon.

He awoke savagely hungry, and, chuckling to himself at the idea that it was worth while to sustain life in a body so near dissolution as his own, he stripped off his coat and

waistcoat. He rolled the inner garment into a small bundle, and buttoned his coat over his last threadbare shirt.

"We will eat and drink and be merry," he said, "for to-morrow we shall have made a stir in the world, and nobody will care one sou about it."

He walked into the sunlit streets and found the shop of a dealer in second-hand raiment, with whom he chaffered for the sale of the waistcoat. The dealer examined it with the wrinkled nose, raised eyebrows of disdain, and pursed lips of calculation which mark the practised purchaser. It was nought, said the buyer.

"It will be worth something to-morrow," said Evan, with a laugh, "if you keep it till to-morrow. Come, what are you disposed to give for it?"

"Two francs," the purchaser groaned. "Two francs at the utmost."

"Good!" said the desperate youngster, with an air of Bohemian merriment. "I don't see why I shouldn't make it valuable to you. Give me a pencil or a pen, and I guarantee that you sell it as a curio for a hundred francs to-morrow."

The Hebrew dealer, void of speculation in the larger sense, pottered down upon his counter a franc, a piece for fifty centimes, and ten greasy sous. Seeing his customer pre-engaged, he withdrew one of these, and smiled to see the victim of his art sweep the miserable little handful of money into his pocket without counting it.

"Come," said Evan, "a pencil. You shall have my autograph on the lining. For one day, to-morrow, I shall be the most celebrated man in Paris."

The man gave him a pencil, and he wrote his name in sprawling letters upon the white satinet. He did this with a certain complaisance, and quoted to himself as he left the shop, out of his English reading, which had been

wide and varied considering his years : "The mirth of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot." The ancient Hebrew hobbled to his door-way, and, having cast a single glance in the direction of his departing customer, went back, clothed with mercantile splendors of his own imagination. The pilfered halfpenny was sweeter than a penny of honest profit.

Evan's cheap five-chambered revolver was in the breast-pocket of his coat. He hugged it as he walked toward the restaurant at which he took his meals. If a guest was not particular as to the quality of his provender, he might have a great deal for two francs at this house of entertainment, and Evan breakfasted magnificently, and drank half a bottle of thin wine. The stomach is the one enduring organ, he reflected. It asserts its claim and levies its tolls up to the last minute.

There was a little spot he knew not far from the Cascade in the Bois de Boulogne, a green space with overshadowing trees and grass to lie upon. At this season of the year the place would not be deserted for five minutes at a time all day long, and the body of a suicide lying there would be certain of almost immediate discovery. As he walked along the street his fancy showed him a hundred ways in which the discovery was made. His own body lay in its respectable dark garments, with arms extended, and now a spectacled student, with his index finger between the leaves of a book, and now a romping girl, in a white dress with pink sprigs, pursued by her sweetheart, and now a chattering party of children, came upon the scene. Imagination was so vivid that he saw all these people and countless others, and emotion was so numbed that within himself he felt absolutely nothing—neither fear nor remorse, neither sorrow nor self-pity. From time to time, as he walked, he put up his hand to the weapon which nestled near his heart and felt its outlines.

Well, at least he was meeting his doom like a man. There was a certain satisfaction in his mind, a certain approval of his own *sang-froid.* He had, in one way or another, mislaid the purpose of his life. He had no time in which to look for it, and could do nothing with it now if it were found. He reasoned out the theories which had led him to so early and so mournful a close for all things. Even now he could find no fault with them, could discover no flaw. The eloquent periods of Cadoudal's speech, which at the time of its utterance he seemed scarcely to have heard, came back to him. They sounded convincing as they repeated themselves upon his inward ear, and yet his heart rejected the conclusion to which they forced his mind. Like Hamlet he had seen that the world was out of joint, and like Hamlet he had felt that he was born to set it right. He had experienced the cursed spite of it, but he had put all that behind him. With all his indifference he knew that the calm in which he walked was the calm of the heart of the whirlwind.

He walked leisurely, for he felt neither haste nor dread, and the end would come in its due time. The road leading to the Bois was not crowded at this season with fashionable equipages, as it would have been two or three months earlier, but brakes and omnibuses, bearing crowds of English and American tourists, bowled along, and a flood of hired fiacres and an unending procession of foot passengers poured in one direction. He was one of the throng. They were all travelling in the same direction, and would all reach the same bourne, he a little earlier than the rest.

Suddenly he caught sight of the Marais Castel liveries, and a second later met the eye of their owner point-blank. He did not guess it, but, in spite of the inward calm on which he congratulated himself, there was a look in his face to arrest attention. No discerning man could have

regarded him for an instant without reading pure desperation there. The duke held up a hand to him and called sharply to his coachman. Evan had raised his wide-awake, and passed on, but the returning carriage caught him in a moment.

"Evan!" called the duke imperatively, and he was compelled to turn. "Jump in here. I have to speak to you."

Evan entered the open carriage submissively. He was in no hurry, and one place would serve his purpose as well as another. He surrendered the fancy in favor of that shadowed turfy space in the Bois.

The duke gave his orders to the coachman, and the carriage turned again and rolled swiftly cityward. The drive to the Quai d'Orsai occupied the better part of half an hour, but neither the duke nor Evan spoke a word. As the carriage pulled up briskly at the entrance to the hôtel on the Quai d'Orsai a gaunt, slouching man, who was lounging near at hand, gave a great start, and Evan, recognizing him, started also.

"You know that blackguard?" asked the duke sternly. "He slinks off, you observe. I met that fellow in Adelaide, a pretended convert from the Roman Catholic Church, addressing nonconformist audiences in broken English, and varying his devotional exercises by a little pocket-picking and an occasional forgery. I saw him again two years ago in Lyons, itinerant pill-vender and street conjurer. Now I learn that he is one of your own precious confraternity." They were by this time in the duke's private apartments. "My poor lad. You are going from bad to worse. I know your associates, and the police know them as well as I do. Cadoudal is a rhetorical old windbag. Petrovna is a madman. Frost is a blackguard who has traded basely for years on the American-Irish. What is the good of these people? Why do you consort with them when you

have the chance of knowing the best men in the world? And, forgive me, my young friend, what is this?"

He laid a sudden hand upon the young man's breast, where the outline of the revolver was clearly marked in the cloth of the close-buttoned coat.

"Why does a civilized man in a civilized city carry that sort of gimcrack? Hand it to me."

"I have a use for it, sir," said Evan.

"Oh!" cried the duke, "is it so deep, and are we so far under water? You infernal young idiot! You wilful muncher of bitter bread! You crowned king of the long-eared thistle-eating tribe! I have never been able altogether to play the grandee with you, Evan, for a good many years ago you helped me on occasion to carry slops to the pigs at Koollala, and that memory detracts from any sense of more recent dignity. I won't play the patron, but take me as an elder brother, you foolish and misguided fellow. Come, my lad." He laid a hand on either shoulder and rocked the wretched youngster to and fro. "You should do what the devil you liked with yourself, but I don't want you to hurt me. D—— it all, my boy, I love you, and it goes to my heart to see you spoil yourself."

The bright calm in which he had walked toward death was clouded for Evan. The tears ran down his face, and a gasping sob or two escaped him. He crumpled in his nervous hands the black felt hat from which he had drawn the two fatal tickets five weeks ago, and on a sudden, to his utter and complete amazement, there fell from the lining, before his tear-blurred eyes, a crimson slip, on which he read his own name. He dashed a hand across his face, seized the slip, and stared at it hard.

"What is this?" asked the duke. But the young man returned no answer. His right hand travelled mechanically to the ticket pocket in which he had placed the fatal paper which had condemned him to the assassination of the

Duke of Kingsclear. His fingers found it, and he laid it side by side with the other in the crown of his hat.

"Is that," asked the duke, "the form of visiting-card in use among the brotherhood?"

"No, sir," Evan answered. "It seems to serve another purpose."

He was like a man who, standing in pitch darkness, sees the whole landscape before him from right to left suddenly illuminated by a flash of lightning, and finds every detail fired, as it were, upon the mind with a minuteness and distictness which could only have come of long observation in plain day.

"You say, sir," he said, "that that fellow Percheron was a conjurer?"

"Are you mad?" cried the duke. "What are you talking of?"

"The man you pointed out to me outside," said Evan—"the fellow who slunk away when the carriage drew up at the door?"

"Oh, that fellow," said the duke. "I thought your wits were wandering. Yes, I saw him amusing a crowd by conjuring tricks in Lyons two years ago. What about him?"

"He seems to have played a trick on me, sir," said Evan calmly. "Something hangs upon it, but not much. I shall have to play a trick upon him and his confederates in return."

"My young friend," said Marais Castel, "I confess honestly I do not like your manner. Give me that toy you carry in your pocket. If you have any use for that at all, it can scarcely be a wholesome one."

Evan surrendered the cheap revolver.

"I have no use for that at present, sir," he said with a queer smile. "If you will allow me, I will go now. I find that I have business to attend to."

"Upon my word," said the duke, "I like your manner less and less, Evan. Either you are playing a theatrical part,—and that is a thing I will not readily insult you by believing,—or there is something in your mind which has no right to be there. Can't you make a friend of me? Can't you make a clean breast of it, and tell me all your troubles?"

As he spoke he reached out both hands toward the lad, who seized upon them with a burst of sobs and tears he had no power or will to control. Evan kissed the hands over and over again, gasping inarticulate words of love and gratitude and contrition. The duke waited, himself not unmoved, for the subsiding of the storm; but on a sudden Evan, with one last wringing of his hands, turned, snatched from the table the hat with the two crimson slips within it, and fairly ran from the room. His kind patron and constant friend followed him, calling on his name, but Evan returned no answer. The astonished doorkeeper let him out into the street, still weeping wildly, and catching his breath in great inward sobs. Passers-by stared after him as he plunged along the pathway. Two or three minutes went by before he was sufficiently master of himself to know that he was observed. When he became aware of this, he smoothed his disordered hair, sought and found the two crimson slips, assumed his hat, and, walking steadily with renewed composure toward the Avenue de la Grande Armée, soon left conjecture and curiosity far behind.

CHAPTER XI

And so M. Percheon was a prestidigitateur, and the ballot of five weeks ago had been a traitorous and wicked farce. His name and the name of Lebon alone had been placed in the hat, and the devilish scheme had made it certain that whatever fragments of paper he had drawn would have condemned the two and no others to the deed of blood assigned them. Cadoudal, the benevolent Cadoudal, was privy to this infamy. Evan read the shaking hand, the strained smile, the choking voice—read their indications now with so absolute a precision that he groaned aloud to think of the blindness which had beset him at the moment. Petrovna knew it. There was a hard, quiet something in his eye which said so much. Dusaulx knew it, and Evan read his knowledge in his downward, listening smile. Ducos knew it, and his braggadocio, semi-drunken swagger, and the bullying bellow with which he answered to his name proclaimed his villany arrogantly. The whole scene was pictured in his mind, not like a picture, but as in a scene upon the stage. He saw the faces, heard the voices, remembered tones and gestures which he did not seem to have noted at the time.

But why should he and Lebon have been fixed upon as the instruments for this double deed of wickedness? He thought he saw the answer clear. Both of them were useful, and each was wavering. A man with an act of assassination behind him was likely to stick at nothing later on, and was held in such a cage of fear and horror by his comrades that he would obey their lightest bidding.

Lebon was in his workshop, pipe in mouth, punching at

a sand mould with the rounded stick used in the trade. He turned and greeted Evan on his entrance with a sidelong nod. His face was even more tearful of aspect than of old, and the very droop of his shoulders as he worked spoke of dejection. The apprentice was away, and Evan closed and barred the door before he spoke.

"Lay that tool down," he said, "and listen to me. I have something to tell you which you must hear."

The man threw down the tool and turned, the corners of his mouth sagging downward like the loose ends of a purse, and his big, protrusive eyes winking and blinking behind a mist of tears.

"They may do as they please," he said. "They will get nothing out of me. That blackguard Ducos has been here. Le vaurien! And unless the job is done to-night, he tells me, it is all over with both of us. I told him to his nose I would see him in hell. We are in rough weather, my comrade."

"We have been brought here by wicked pilotage," said Evan. "You remember it was from my hat that the papers were drawn?"

"I remember," Lebon answered, with a melancholy nod. "What of it?"

Evan laid the two crimson slips before him.

"I found one of these in the lining of my hat to-day. Do you see what that means? This is the paper I drew and this is the one I found. Do you understand? That villain Percheron made a living as a street conjurer. The names of the other men never went into the hat at all."

The man seemed dazed, and looked as if he were wandering in his wits. Evan shook him savagely by the shoulder.

"Do you understand?"

"Yes," he said, "I understand. That is because I would make no more shells for them."

"What do you mean to do?" Evan demanded.

"Do?" said the other. "Nothing."

At this minute there was a hammering at the door, and Evan unbarred and opened it. There stood Petrovna, in his respectable black frock coat, his broad-brimmed soft felt hat, his spectacles, and his huge grizzly beard, presenting a figure almost as benignant and venerable as M. Cadoudal himself.

"Ah," he said, "you are here. I shall kill two birds with one stone."

Evan stood on one side to allow him to enter, and Petrovna crossed the threshold, saluting Lebon by a wave of the walking-stick he carried. Evan's glittering eye never left him for an instant, but the young man put out a backward hand and took up the two strips of paper which lay on the sand in the open half-made mould.

"There is nobody likely to hear us, if we talk business?" asked Petrovna, taking out a handkerchief and lifting his hat to mop the perspiration from his forehead.

"There are three of us," said Lebon sulkily. "You can say what you like. There is no one else to hear."

"I have come to warn you," said Petrovna, addressing Lebon. "I have taken trouble for the sake of my young friend here. You have both had your warning already, but I have busied myself in your behalf. There is a meeting to-night at the house of our venerable friend. If you choose to attend it and make promise of amendment, your late misconduct may be overlooked. If not——" He waved both hands abroad, with the stick in one hand and the handkerchief in the other, and suffered them both to fall resoundingly upon his thighs.

"I shall be there," said Evan, holding that unchanging glance upon him.

"And I," said Lebon, "shall not."

"You told me," said Petrovna, "five weeks ago to-day that you knew the word."

"But yes," said Lebon, "I know the word well. I am afraid neither of the word nor of the thing. Look thee, my friend. A man like me has not a great deal to live for. The best I could do at any time was to keep the old mother. When I had broken my arm and had sold every thing, I took your money. She has need of nothing now, and you may do as you please. You are a bloodthirsty lot," he added, with a curious simplicity. "I would do none of you harm if you would leave me alone, but because I will not oblige you by killing my foster-brother you will kill me. Soit! I never reckoned on making old bones, and I have been ready a hundred times to make away with myself. There is quiet under the green turf, hein? And the old mother is taken care of."

"You," said Petrovna, surveying him with cool scorn, "were always a fool since I have known you. But you,"—he turned on Evan,—"I am glad to see, have the wit to choose the wiser course."

"Yes," said Evan, fingering the slips of paper in his pocket. "I have, as you say, chosen the wiser course. I shall be there to-night, Petrovna. What is the hour?"

"You had best come early," said Petrovna. "We shall meet at nine. Let there be no mistake about the time or place, and do not allow the appointment to elude your memory. You may as well know that your every movement is watched and reported to me hourly. You were seen to enter the house on the Quai d'Orsai not yet two hours ago."

"Yes," said Evan, "I saw and I was seen. That fellow Percheron, who made a living as a pill-vender and street conjurer in Lyons among other places a year or two ago. The man who arranged the papers for the ballot this night five weeks."

Petrovna neither started nor changed in the slightest degree in color, nor gave any slightest indication of an understanding of the inner meaning of this speech.

"That," he said with a faint nod, "is the man. He told me you had recognized him. You," he added, turning to Lebon, "may think things over if you will. That is your own affair. You have till nine o'clock. After that the orders with respect to you cannot be rescinded."

With this he resumed his hat and walked tranquilly away.

"What was there," asked Lebon, laying his hand upon a heavy iron bar which stood beside his furnace door—"what was there to prevent my beating out his wicked life with this? Ah, well, it is best as it is. It would have grieved the old mother to see me go to the guillotine. She will grieve as it is, but the duke will look after her, and a man can only die once. If I were you, my comrade, I should pluck up a heart. You are young, but it is better to die than to have blood on your hands. I have never got rid of that waiter in the Rue Timbale. I may meet him in hell, for any thing I know, though I trust for my own sake that he was a good man."

He took up the tool he had abandoned, and, having made a few aimless strokes with it, threw it down again.

"What is the good of that?" he said. "I have done my last bit of work. Comrade, pluck up a heart and send these wolves to the devil."

"I shall do no work at their bidding," said Evan, "you may be sure of that."

Lebon stretched out his rough hand, and Evan grasped it.

"In that case," he said, "we are going on the same journey. I shall have a glass of wine before I go. It is rare good stuff he sends us. It comes from his own cellars, and I might be drunk from New Year's Day to Christmas. Share a glass, comrade."

Evan would not refuse his whim. They left the workshop and entered the house together. The old woman stood at the window in the cleanest and crispest of caps and aprons, her brown withered fingers busily plying her knitting-needles while she looked out upon the street.

"'Tis thee, my son," she said, turning and smiling as the burly fellow entered.

"C'est bien moi, ma mère," he responded. "Here is our friend Evan Rhys, the protected of our protector."

Mme. Lebon received the young man graciously, and if her bright old eyes took note of his solemnity, she forbore to remark upon it.

"Our friend," said the brass-founder, "is going upon a journey, and has come to say 'Good-by.' We shall break a bottle, my mother, and wish to each other good-luck."

"Eh, bien!" said the old lady. "And a bottle of the best, with all my heart. My good Edouard allows it, and he would not have us stint our friends."

She went nodding and smiling to the cupboard, and took from it a cobwebbed bottle, which she dusted gingerly and insisted on uncorking with her own hands.

"A bottle of good wine," she said, "must be handled like a baby. If I were a duchess, I would never have a man for a butler. You are great clumsy creatures, and are always in danger of breaking things."

She filled two glasses with a humorously affected care, and put one into either hand. Lebon touched Evan's glass with his own.

"Bon voyage, camarade."

They drank together, and then the great fellow put his arm about the old woman's waist.

"Thou also," he said, holding the glass to her lips.

She made at first a pretence of refusing, but finally she sipped at the wine as a bird might have done, and then

made a movement to retire from her son's embrace. He held her still, however, and, having emptied his glass, set it upon the table and took the old woman in both arms. She looked up at him in some amazement, as if this sort of caress were a rarity.

"Eh, ma mère," he said, his big voice shaking a little.

"Eh, mon fils," she answered, in a tender mockery, and he stooped and kissed her twice or thrice upon the forehead, straining her little figure hard in both arms. Evan, standing there, saw that his knotted and warty hands were shaking. "Eh," said Mme. Lebon, half laughing and half crying, "what is it? Thou art more my lad to-day than thou hast been many a year."

"Thou art happy?" said Lebon, looking down at her.

"Right happy, my son," she answered, nestling her withered old face against his blouse for a moment. Then she escaped from him laughing, and gave him a smart tap upon the cheek. "'Tis long," she said, "since thou wert a baby."

Lebon took up the bottle and his glass.

"Good-by, my mother. Come along, friend Rhys."

He led the way back to the workshop and there refilled Evan's glass and his own.

"Thou art unlucky, lad," he said, "to have come to an end so soon. But courage. Maybe the next world will make amends for this."

They clinked their glasses, and drank together.

"My God," said Evan, "you're a brave fellow!"

"Not I," said Lebon quite simply. "I've been a crying coward all my life, but it has always been for her, you understand. As for myself,"—he struck the framework of the mould before him with a heavy hand,—"this won't hurt. I sha'n't have time to feel it. The old mother will think it was an accident, and will have masses said for me.

She is a good woman, and has never neglected her services for a day."

He began to bustle about, stirring his furnace fire, and inspecting his melting-pot. Then he took the bottle, and poured what remained of its contents into the sand of the mould, and busied himself in mixing it until the whole mass was slightly moistened.

"That should serve my turn," he said.

He turned over the ponderous lid, and bolted it down.

"Good-by, lad."

Evan took the proffered hand in both his own and wrung it in silence.

"Go now," said Lebon. "My affair will be settled in five minutes. The metal is ready."

When Evan had left him, Lebon made quiet preparation for the end. He arranged the duct by which the metal was to flow into the mould, and swung out from the furnace the big crucible of molten brass. He seized this firmly in a huge pair of nippers, and poured with a steady hand. The shining, blinding stream ran along the duct, and there came a crash in which, for a mere instant of time, the whole world seemed to reel.

Poor Lebon had been a true prophet. He had had no time to feel.

CHAPTER XII

Evan walked very quietly along the Avenue de la Grande Armée, and nobody encountering him would have been inclined to think that he had any thing very special on his mind. He looked a little moody, and a little tired, perhaps, but that was all. He had made up his mind at a crisis so tremendous that its contemplation in another man's career would have been appalling, and for the time being he was barely able to take an interest in it. When the body has endured as much as is endurable, the sufferer swoons. When a mental agony has grown unbearable, the mind refuses to regard it further. Nature will endure so much, and no more. If she is pressed beyond her powers, she slips aside and finds refuge in insensibility or indifference.

He was walking about the streets of a great capital with the signs of the reign of law and order everywhere. He might have purchased a temporary safety by an appeal to authority, but he had no impulse in that direction. There was no permanent refuge for him anywhere, and he saw no relief from his present certainty of death in the prospect of a life of fears.

There was only one person in the world to whom he cared to say good-by. He bent his steps toward Quahar's lodgings, but, when he reached the door, he was reluctant to enter. He feared that something in his manner would betray him, or that he might break down under the stress of his farewells. He lingered for a time, and then walked away decisively.

It was a strange thing, he could not but think,—though it interested him less than the relation of such a case in a

story-book,—that he should be walking about, alive and well, free of restraint, and yet marked for death, and as much a prisoner as if he were immured among stone walls.

Of only one thing he was quite certain : He would not be snuffed out and thrown aside by that congregation of callous traitors without struggle and without protest, and he would not die unavenged.

He went to his own rooms, and sat there for an hour or two, hardly feeling the time so long. He thought of his childhood in the English western country, and his early boyhood in Australia. The clock of the neighboring church chimed and chimed, and at last he heard it with a conscious ear, and arose to put into execution the purpose which had, from the first moment when he had been certain of his own doom, formed itself within his mind.

There lay in a locked drawer in his bedroom a hollow, uncharged shell, which had long since been handed to him by Petrovna as a sample of the weapons of destruction he was expected to make active. He unlocked the drawer, and found the harmless thing still lying in the small black handbag of American leather in which it had been carried to him. He took it from its resting-place, and charged it with a compound so delicate and deadly that merely to handle it was to risk life. Early in his manipulation of the material supplied to him, and in the pursuit of an ideal fulfilment of M. Cadoudal's formula, he had discovered that the preparation in this especial stage was so susceptible that the faintest shock would awake it to action. He had experimented with infinitesimal quantities only, but he could guess what the effect of a bomb charged with this irritable devil of a powder would be. Of necessity he handled it with the utmost care, but he filled it to its capacity, closed the orifice through which the powder had been poured, and, when the dangerous engine was fully prepared, packed it lightly yet firmly in cotton-wool, stuff-

ing it inside the bag in such a manner that an explosive shock was scarcely possible.

He had still some hours before him, and a restlessness which began to creep upon his nerves forbade him to remain indoors. He locked up the bag and wandered into the street again, and his feet led him back to Quahar's door. The original objection to entering there was to the full as strong as ever ; but he made light of it, passed the *concierge* with a nod, and mounted the stone stairs. There at the very door of the chambers he fell musing, and so stood, staring nervously before him, for five minutes or so, until at last, without being conscious of any new impulse in his own mind, he knocked.

Effie herself answered to his summons, and bade him enter. Her father and the little French maid who ministered to their wants were both away, she explained, and she was quite alone. There was a radiant something in her manner the young man had never before noticed. She had been thinking of him, and hoping for him, and even yearning over him a little, and now at his coming for the first time in her life she was shy. She led the way into the sitting-room, and, taking up a piece of work she had laid down, pointed him to a chair. What with the unwonted delicate clear flush on her cheek, and the softer glance of her eye, she would have looked charming to the eyes of any man. The lover condemned to death had never seen a woman so lovely, so beautiful.

In spite of her invitation to be seated he kept his feet. He had come to say good-by, and now that seemed the last and the greatest of follies. He was unable to find a word, and could only stand there, awkward and mournful, looking at her with an almost vacant gaze.

"You are not well, Evan," she said, rising and standing before him. "What is it? You are in trouble! in distress! Has any thing happened? Tell me."

"Nothing of any moment," he responded, clearing his harsh throat with difficulty. "I was passing, and I wanted to call."

"You are not——" She left the question unfinished, but she stood before him with clasped hands, and tried to read his gloomy face. As she looked he smiled, with a wonderful, strange sweetness.

"God bless you!" he half whispered. "I don't know why I said that," he went on, in an inward, strange-sounding voice. "I was never bred to believe in that sort of thing, but it felt like a prayer, and I said it without knowing it. I hope you'll be happy. It's a queer sort of world, as I've found it, but some people can be happy in it. I hope you may be one of them."

"You are very strange to-day, Evan," she answered. "I am sure I can see some very serious trouble in your face. Sit down and tell me what it is. Even if I can't help, I can sympathize, and it eases one to tell one's troubles to a friend."

"No," said Evan, "I have no trouble that won't be cured in an hour or two. There is nothing of lasting moment. I wanted to see you so much to-day that I couldn't resist the impulse to come here. But now I have nothing to do, and I am very dull company, and I will say good-by."

He held out his hand, and she surrendered her own, searching his face with a glance of kindly perplexity and wonder. The look was a little more than friendly. There was a tenderness in it which he had never seen before. He met her eyes with the same strange smile, and it seemed to cut her to the heart.

"Oh, Evan!" she besought him, "tell me what your trouble is, and let me try to help you."

"No," he said, still smiling. "I can't tell you any thing, dearest. The trouble, such as it is, will soon be over."

"Evan," she cried, with pale face and dilating eyes, "you can't mean that——"

"You shall know every thing to-morrow," he answered.

"I shall see you to-morrow?" she asked him, holding his hand in both her own.

"Yes," he replied. "There is no reason why you should not see me to-morrow if you wish it."

Half the fear went out of her face, and she drew a breath of relief.

"Evan," she said, "you are ill, and aged and altered. My father speaks often of your associates, and is always certain that they will lead you into mischief—into ruin. Don't let them do that. You are so young; you have so much before you! You might be so happy and useful and honored. Don't throw it all away for a chimera."

"Dearest," he said, and she made no pretence of coyness at the repetition of the word, "I shall remember all you have said. I shall think of it. It will not leave my mind. Let that content you now, and let me say good-by."

They had held each other by the hand all this time, and now, bending over her, he put his arm about her neck and drew her to him. He kissed her solemnly and dispassionately, and she submitted to the caress.

"You promise me that?" she asked. "You promise to remember?"

"Always to the very end," he answered. "I have mismanaged my life somehow, or it has been mismanaged for me. I must make a better use of what is left. Good-by."

He kissed her again and left her, smiling through brave tears at him as he turned to look at her for the last time at the door-way. His heart, dull as it was with aching, smote him for the deception his words conveyed.

"I could not help it," he told himself. "When she hears what has happened, she may understand. At least, she will

be at peace for a few hours, and in a few hours I shall be at peace forever."

It was as if a whole ocean of despair throbbed through the caverns of his soul, with Farewell, farewell, farewell! in the voice of its awful surge.

At the very sounding of the hour of nine he presented himself at Cadoudal's door, and was admitted. He was ushered as usual to the library, and there he found the master of the house, together with Petrovna, Dusaulx, Ducos, Pecheron, and Frost.

"We have awaited your coming with anxiety," said Cadoudal. "We have learned from our excellent friend Petrovna that you had promised to be here."

They were all standing in various attitudes about the table. Petrovna and Cadoudal were cordial in their looks, but Percheron, Dusaulx, and Ducos looked angry and sullen, and Frost was purely indifferent. Evan set down the black bag he carried on a table at the end of the room, and kept his place near it.

"Yes," he said, in answer to Cadoudal, "I promised to be here."

"I am rejoiced," said Cadoudal, "that you have kept your promise. There is no disposition on my side toward hostility, but the commands laid upon you have been disregarded, and it is necessary that you should understand the position."

"My voice," said Dusaulx, "is for the penalty." He spoke so rarely that his raven croak sounded as a surprise.

"And mine," said Ducos.

"And mine," said Percheron.

"Comrades," urged Cadoudal, in his most persuasive tones, "the question has already been debated, and it has been thought advisable by the greater number of us to offer our youthful companion an opportunity of returning to his allegiance."

"Just so," cried Ducos with an oath. "And what are we all doing, I should like to know, if we are to be governed by majorities? To the devil with majorities! Let us have liberty. Liberty and death!"

"My good Ducos," Cadoudal besought him, "leave something to the balance of opinion in our commonwealth. Let us at least understand what our comrade is prepared to do."

"Very well," said Dusaulx. "Let him give an account of himself."

"Yes," said Frost. "Let him give an account of himself."

"I have something here," Evan said, panting in his speech at first, and looking from one to another with a strange glance—"I have something here which may be of service."

He opened the bag with extreme nicety, drew away the cotton-wool from over the bomb, and with that instrument in his right hand approached the table. Whatever else his face spoke,—and it was full of strange matter,—there was no fear in it.

"This, messieurs——" he began; but Ducos broke in, objecting to the form of address. There were no messieurs here, no, nor citizens. Comrades was the word, and the only word. "Silence, animal!" cried Evan passionately. "Listen, all of you!"

Ducos made a movement as if to pass round the table, but Petrovna waved him back.

"Wait a little. Wait a little."

"I hold here," said Evan, "a shell made after our excellent Cadoudal's formula. It is fully charged." Cadoudal backed with a blanched face, and Frost uttered an inarticulate moan. "Some of you, it would seem, are men of peace," continued Evan, with a wild badinage. "If a man moves hand or foot I let this fall. I think I can command safety until I have said my say."

Petrovna stood like a rock, but the rest cowered and crouched, staring at the speaker and his weapon, with distorted faces.

"I was warned by you this afternoon," said Evan. "Tell me by what authority the task I have failed to perform was imposed upon me?"

"The choice fell upon you by ballot," Petrovna said.

"By ballot! By a ballot in which every paper bore one name, my own."

At this each man started, and for a mere instant of time even the swift death which lay poised in the accuser's hand was half forgotten.

"Traitors! Liars and murderers all!" cried Evan madly. He flung into the air the two crimson strips of paper, and by hazard they fell upon the table face upward, so that all could see and read. "It is in this nest of infamy we hatch our schemes of reformation for the world. That wretch,"—pointing with his left hand to Percheron, who shrank against the wall as if he would fain shrink through it,—"that wretch was brought here to falsify the ballot! He did his work well, and he shall be paid for it.

"I came here under sentence of death, and I know full well that there is no escape for me. I ask for no promise, and I would not accept it if it were sworn and signed by every one of you."

"You will not be troubled to accept it," Petrovna broke in, unshaken by the threat which had quelled the others. "You will be dealt with only on the ground on which we have decided. You will obey the instructions given, or you will go to your doom."

"I shall not go alone," Evan answered, "nor shall I delay my going long." A wail of terror rose from Frost and Percheron, but the rest at least were men. "You saw me slipping away from you, you saw me with eyes opening little by little to the monstrous nature of your creed,

you saw me week by week a less willing tool, and so I was to be put away by treason. You found the same change in Lebon, and he too must go. Well, you have passed sentence upon me, and I accept my fate. But you share it with me, comrades at the last, at least."

"Despatch, then!" cried Cadoudal.

"Let him have his life!" screamed Frost, recovering the power of speech. "Give him a safeguard! Let him go away!"

"He shall have no safeguard!" said Petrovna. "I claim obedience or I ask for punishment."

"Punishment!" cried Evan in a wild voice, raising the bomb high in his right hand. Not a man moved except Ducos, and he, with his bloodshot eyes blazing, and with trembling hands, was searching for something underneath his blouse. His hand found and clutched the butt of a revolver, and he levelled the weapon full at Evan's breast. "Fool!" said the young man. "Fire, and bring down your own doom."

The shot rang out, and Evan, falling forward, struck the bomb upon the table before him. There was one hideous crash. The house seemed to rock, and the room was wrecked from end to end. A sluggish, evil-smelling smoke crawled through orifices in walls and ceiling, and the six men lay in eternal quiet, to dream no more mad dreams, to plan no more horrors for the relief of a suffering world.

They are gone each to his own place, where, perchance, some root of wisdom grows. But of this no man knows any thing.

THE END

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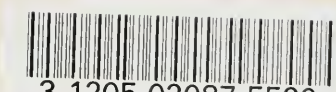
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